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Inter-Arab Affairs

Damascus Declaration Countries Issue Statement

LD1607181291 London KUNA in Arabic 1653 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Kuwait, 16 Jul (KUNA)—At the end of their meetings here today, the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration countries endorsed "the final draft of this declaration; every country should take the necessary steps to ratify it according to its own procedures."

A statement read by Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] Secretary General Mr. 'Abdallah Ya'qub Bisharah at the end of the meetings said that the foreign ministers of the GCC countries and Egypt and Syria also agreed to hold a meeting in September 1991 to follow up the implementation of the Damascus Declaration and to determine the priorities suitable for that.

The ministers expressed their indignation at the Iraqi regime's failure to implement all its commitments according to the UN Security Council resolutions, and at its aggressive intentions which have led to the continuation of the sanctions specified in the UN Security Council resolutions.

They also expressed their indignation at the Iraqi regime's lack of cooperation and procrastination in implementing resolutions concerning the release of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and others detained in Iraq, and also its procrastination in the demarcation of the international borders between Iraq and Kuwait on the basis of what the two countries agreed in 1932 and 1963, and in handing back all the museum possessions taken by the Iraqi regime, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 687.

The ministers expressed anew their feelings of deep pain and extreme sorrow at the most appalling forms of humiliation to which the Iraqi people are exposed as a result of the Iraqi leadership acting in disregard of that people's interests.

They emphasized their standing by the Iraqi people in their crisis and also emphasized their complete commitment to Iraqi territorial integrity and regional security.

The statement pointed out that the ministers discussed the developments concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue. They emphasized the necessity of achieving a just and comprehensive solution for this conflict based on the UN resolutions and the principles of international legitimacy. They expressed their support for the international efforts exerted toward achieving this through holding a peace conference for implementing the UN Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolutions 242 and 668, in a way which secures the end of the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories and secures the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

In this connection the foreign ministers welcomed the reply of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to the message of U.S. President George Bush on the peace process.

They praised the constructive Syrian stance and appealed to the parties concerned to start the peace process without delay and to continue their support for and follow up of it until the fulfillment of its aims by the implementation of the relevant UN resolutions.

In their statement, the ministers saluted the steadfastness of the Kuwaiti people in the face of the murderous campaigns and torture operations carried out by the Iraqi occupation forces.

They lauded the firm position adopted by the sons of Kuwait who confronted and resisted the aggression, insisting on their independence, preserving their free will, and defending their legitimacy under the leadership of His Highness Shaykh Jabir al- Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah and his heir apparent, Shaykh Sa'd al- 'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah. They expressed their pride in the valuable guidance given by His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah when they were honored by meeting him.

The ministers stressed the need to make the Middle East region a zone free from all types of weapons of mass destruction; this should apply to all states in the region, especially regarding nuclear weapons.

They expressed their satisfaction with the positive and constructive steps achieved by the Lebanese Government, as expressed in the imposition of its legitimate authority on Lebanese territory in accordance with the articles of the al-Ta'if document on national reconciliation. They stressed the need to compel Israel to unconditionally withdraw from southern Lebanon in line with UN Security Council Resolution 425.

The statement said that the ministers considered the current Arab situation in line with their leaders' desire to clear the Arab air and strengthen relations among the Arab states on the basis of affirming the Arab states' commitment to the principles of the Damascus Declaration, especially those relating to Arab and international legitimacy; respect for the sovereignty and national independence of states and their right over their national wealth; the use of peaceful means to settle conflicts; and non-interference in internal affairs.

The ministers expressed at the end of their meeting their thanks and gratitude to the leadership and people of the sisterly state of Kuwait for the generosity, hospitality, and welcome accorded to them and for the good organization, which had a great impact in making their meeting a success.

Egyptian Minister Comments

NC1607180491 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1640 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Kuwait, 16 Jul (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has denied that "special detailed

amendments" have been made to the Damascus Declaration, adding that the issue was not even discussed during today's meeting of the Damascus Declaration's foreign ministers. He noted that "a slight amendment" was made to certain paragraphs in the declaration to make the procedures more emphatic, clear, and action oriented.

In a statement made today in Kuwait, Musa said that agreement on "the understanding procedures" will lead to more coordination on Gulf security in an Arab framework as well as a number of issues that concern the Arab homeland, particularly the eight countries. An agreement was reached to hold further meetings on various levels, he added.

The Foreign Minister said that the eight countries that signed the Damascus Declaration agree totally on the need to study and unify security cooperation and to implement the principles and goals outlined in the declaration. There have been no differences in our views, he emphasized, but several ideas on how to implement and follow up the Damascus Declaration have been proposed.

Musa noted that certain measures will need to be agreed on regarding the enforcement of the agreement. He denied that enforcing the declaration would require a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Committee, chaired by Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman, noting that there are no links or contradictions between the committee's work and the Damascus Declaration. He also said that the Damascus Declaration is not linked with any other security arrangements between the allied countries or any other countries.

Minister Musa said he conveyed a verbal message from President Husni Mubarak to the amir of Kuwait, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, and to Heir Apparent and Crown Prince Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah. He noted that he is carrying a reply from the Kuwaiti officials to President Mubarak on issues of common concern and bilateral relations and that he will submit a report to President Mubarak on the meetings and his talks with the Kuwaiti officials.

When asked if the declaration would be amended to include Iran in Gulf security arrangements, Musa said that no other countries have been added to the eight countries that signed the declaration, pointing out that the Damascus Declaration formula allows other Arab countries to join according to "specific cases and within a framework of an agreement among the eight member countries." He noted that a slight changes mentioned above did not deal with security or economic issues, but with "the follow up" details.

Meetings will eventually cover economic aspects as well as security and political ones Musa noted. There will be other meetings, he added, the venue and dates of which will be set later. He said that a meeting among the leaders of the eight countries was not discussed. In conclusion, Musa described the Syrian response to the U.S. President's proposals as "positive."

Kuwaiti Minister on 'Total Harmony'

LD1607184991 London KUNA in Arabic 1746 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Kuwait, 16 Jul (KUNA)—Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaykh Salim al-Sabah stressed that an atmosphere of "total harmony" prevailed in the proceedings of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration member countries which concluded here today. Shaykh Salim al-Sabah said in a statement to the journalists following the final session that the ministers "aimed at achieving the noble goal of the member countries of the Damascus Declaration on the economic and political levels, and the result was total agreement on the articles of the declaration."

He added that the eight ministers will hold a meeting next September to propose the executive plans. This issue is being left to specialized experts. He pointed out that the ministers discussed the financial situation during the meeting and agreed on all the issues between the participant countries.

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah announced that the eight signatories of the Damascus Declaration "will reject Iraq's request to have the Arab League hold a meeting," and stressed that this rejection is based on realistic bases about which the Arab countries and peoples should be aware. He added that "the Iraqi regime did not care about the Arab League when it issued the so-called Iraqi memorandum in July 1990; on the contrary, Kuwait requested an Arab solution for the memorandum. It is only now that Iraq remembers that there is an Arab League and an Arab nation."

He stressed that "the regime in Baghdad must implement all the Arab League resolutions concerning Iraq and its unjust aggression against Kuwait; then, we will look into the [Arab League] meeting."

Answering a question on the Iranian role in the security arrangements, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah said that the Iranian role is different from the subject of the Damascus Declaration because the declaration concerns the Arab world and complements the role of the Arab League. Iran is a friendly Islamic neighboring state that has its prestige, but the Damascus Declaration looks at our Arab affairs which are outside the framework of any other state.

Shaykh Salim pointed out that the ministers introduced a few minor amendments to the Damascus Declaration to affirm and strengthen the basic principles on which the objectives of the declaration charter were based. He said that there is no need now for a meeting at the level of the leaders of the eight states, but if circumstances require, then a summit could take place.

Shaykh Salim concluded his statement by affirming that the Damascus Declaration is open to all states that want to be members of it, on condition that the country believes in the sincere Arab positions.

Iraq Invites Arab League to Nuclear Plants

NC1607165291 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1452 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid met with Ambassador Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent delegate to the Arab League today. After the meeting, Ambassador Najm said that he gave 'Abd-al-Majid a message from the Iraqi foreign minister regarding Iraq's stand on the escalating American and Western campaign against it. In the message, the Iraqi foreign minister suggested that 'Abd-al-Majid form an Arab committee to visit Iraq and conduct a field tour of all nuclear plants, which are used only for peaceful purposes, and to see for themselves the facilities Iraq opened to the international team.

Revival of Gulf Cooperation Council Urged

PM1607080491 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Jul 91 p 1

['Abd-al-Bari 'Atwan article: "A Nation's Humiliation"]

[Text] U.S. threats to launch a military strike against Iraq are continuing because of rumors about its concealment of a number of nuclear technological facilities and its failure to cooperate with UN experts in this regard.

We might wake up one day to the news that heavy Atlantic raids have been launched—on the pretext of the existence of nuclear reactors—to destroy what has not already been destroyed or what has been achieved in the tireless rebuilding process in Iraq.

The distressing thing is that these threats are meeting with support in some Arab circles, silence in other circles, and total paralysis on everyone's part. Gulf circles, which used the occupation of Kuwait as an excuse to participate in the process of destroying Iraq, are still willing to repeat the same even after the end of the crisis and the restoration of matters to their previous status. As for the other Arab states which participated with symbolic forces to prove their concern for international law and implementation it, they came out of this war with nothing but ingratitude, campaigns of suspicion, meager financial aid, and a security system in the Gulf region that excludes them completely and gives the United States the principal and exclusive role.

The deadlock currently dominating Arab political thinking must not continue because its continuation would have negative repercussions for all the region's states without exception—both for Washington's allies and for its enemies—and it is illogical for this nation to remain unable to find ways out of and solutions to this dilemma in order at least to reduce the dangers, if it proves difficult to eliminate them.

If an influential and effective move is needed in this regard, it must come from Egypt and Syria in particular, especially after the failure of all the attempts to bring them together with the "rich" Gulf states in a regional grouping whose ideological base is the Damascus Declaration. The reason for this is the Gulf states' adoption of an openly isolationist line toward the other Arabs. They also base their security strategies on defense pacts with Western, not Arab, states, proceeding from the premise that their material wealth is a formidable fortress that should be kept away from the poor Arabs, no matter how good the intentions of some of their leaderships.

A revival of the Arab Cooperation Council—which comprised Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen—could represent an element of balance in the face of U.S. hegemony operations if it is joined by Syria and Sudan and if it finds Islamic depth in Iran.

Now that it has become clear that the United States is continuing to suffocate Iraq, starve its people, and uproot its military capabilities following their destruction, we can no longer rule out the possibility that it will later move on to Syria in order to drag it—somehow or another—into another confrontation to eliminate all its weapons, missiles, and aircraft, thus realizing its plan to disarm the Middle East region in its own way and in accordance with the Atlantic concept.

Undoubtedly the success of Libya's mediation in arranging the recent meeting between President Yasir 'Arafat and Egyptian Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi in Banghazi and the reports of a high-level Palestinian delegation's visit to Cairo next Saturday could be an encouraging step toward the hoped for move.

How about an Egyptian delegation visiting Iraq in response to the Iraqi desire for Egyptian companies' involvement in the rebuilding operations? How about holding a Syrian-Iraqi meeting on the sidelines of an emergency Arab League Council meeting to discuss the faltering of the peace process and growing Jewish emigration to the occupied territories?

It is sad that this nation should turn into a corpse while the United States continues to roam the region, exercising its "sadism" against a firmly established state as a punishment for its insolence toward their highnesses the Zionists. Iraq's humiliation is a nation's humiliation, regardless of the disagreement or agreement over its political system.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Adviser Abu-Sharif on Prospects for Talks

LD1607212791 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Excerpts] The Group of Seven's appeal for an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza seems to be offering some impetus to diplomacy in the Middle East. [passage omitted]

Among the reactions, here is that of Bassam Abu-Sharif, adviser to the Palestinian head of state, who positively welcomes the Syrian answer to the U.S. proposals. He talks about the Arab and American positions:

[Begin recording] [Abu-Sharif] I would say that the Arab position toward the efforts intended to start the peace process is very clear to everybody now. Also clear to everyone is the Israeli position which is the real obstacle hindering the launch of the peace process. We have accepted the U.S. political proposals, that is the settlement of the Middle East problem on the basis of international legality, on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions concerning the Middle East, that is resolutions 242 and 338, and the resolutions concerning the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and national independence. Now we believe that the U.S. Administration, the United States, should take concrete steps for implementing the UN resolutions. The United States should prove to the Arab people that there is one measure, one criterion, for implementing international legality, that is, the United States should ask Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories.

[Announcer] Among the U.S. proposals there is the regional peace conference, and so far the PLO has refused a regional peace conference.

[Abu-Sharif] The PLO has always supported implementing UN Security Council resolutions concerning the Middle East, and the U.S. proposal of holding a regional conference is a technical stage, as part of a mechanism to reach a peaceful settlement. We are not against any conference but we are interested in the substance of the conference. We should have a conference which discusses a political settlement on the basis of international legality, that is Israel withdraws from the occupied territories and the Palestinian people enjoy the right to self-determination, national independence, and the right to establish an independant state. It is the substance and not the form. We have already supported the idea of an international or regional conference if the conference is based on UN Resolutions 242 and 238 and the other resolutions which declare the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independant state. That is why we have said that the PLO is asking for the participation of Europe or the countries which are permament members of the UN Security Council and the United Nations.

[Announcer] Israel has described the Syrian response as positive on the condition that Syria be ready to start direct negotiations with Israel. What do you think?

[Abu-Sharif] We are going to negotiate with our enemies, we are not going to negotiate with ghosts. Israel is the enemy which is occupying the territories and the Arabs are going to negotiate with Israel. They are direct negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations and under the auspices of the USSR and the United States. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Preparatory Committee Discusses PNC Formation

LD1607204191 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] The preparatory committee of the Palestine National Council [PNC] began its meetings in Tunis last night under the chairmanship of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sayih, speaker of the PNC, in the presence of brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], president of the state of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, and members of the Executive Committee and the Central Council of the Organization.

The meeting discussed the nature of the next PNC session and its internal formation.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sayih made a statement to the Palestinian news agency in which he said: The preparatory committee discussed the arrangements and regulations relating to preparations for the formation of the new PNC. We broadened the discussions to include work toward consolidating Palestinian unity. He went on to say: We hope shortly to lay down strong foundations and rules for the formation of the PNC and to do so soon because the conspiracies to which the Palestinian question is being subjected, by Americans, by other foreign quarters, or by others, require the convening of the PNC as soon as possible, in order to confront these situations and to adopt a decisive attitude that accords with the interests of the Palestinian people and its just cause.

PCP Urges Membership Reduction

JN1607143691 Amman AL-RAY in Arabic 16 Jul 91 p 22

[Text] Amman—The Palestine Communist Party [PCP] deeply regrets that some Palestinian forces have rejected an invitation to participate in the preparatory committee meeting to form the seventh Palestine National Council [PNC]. The PCP asked that the PNC membership be reduced to 160 members, only one-fourth of its current membership, as an important step to increase its efficiency.

In a memorandum to the chairman and members of the preparatory committee, the PCP stressed that when defining the basis on which the PNC should be formed, the committee must take into consideration the increasing importance of our people's struggle in the occupied territories by increasing their representatives in the PNC so their number will be equal to those from outside the occupied territories. The number of PNC members from the diaspora areas should be fixed in accordance with the political importance of each area, the role it plays, and the size of the Palestinian community there.

The PCP also emphasized the need for fixing the number of PNC representatives from the Palestinian parties and factions in accordance with their role and actual influence in the Palestinian arena of struggle, and reducing

the number of representatives from the Palestinian popular unions outside the occupied territories in view of their weak links with the social groups they represent.

The PCP demanded that a number of PNC seats be allotted to Palestinian deportees, competent Palestinian elements, experts, and scientists, and that the by-laws and regulations governing the work of the PNC, the PLO Central Council, and their committees be reviewed.

Renewal Committee Ends Work

*LD1860*170691 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 16 Jul 91*

[Text] The preparatory committee for renewing the Palestinian parliament in exile concluded its work today in Tunis. This will open the doors for the breakaway and new squads to issue recommendations to be submitted to the Palestinian president, Yasir 'Arafat.

The Palestinian breakaway organizations, which are centered in Damascus, and the Hamas movement, which is within the occupied territories, boycotted these meetings which commenced the day before yesterday under the chairmanship of Shaykh Abd-al-Hamid al- Sa'ih, speaker of the Palestine National Council.

Comment Says PLO Working To Clear Arab Air

*JN1860*203191 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1600 GMT 16 Jul 91*

[Unattributed talk]

[Text] Brothers: No matter how the Gulf crisis reshuffled the cards and produced divergent Arab views and positions, it should not be allowed to shape the political future of the region in accordance with the firm or stubborn stances that some forces in the region believe will continue forever. Higher Arab interests and a common Arab destiny and security dictate the reshuffling of cards on the basis of joint Arab action, which is imperative if we are to face the winds of change that are hitting human societies hard—either putting them at the point of collapse or qualifying them to survive and progress. Neither fanaticism nor tribalism will do any good; only wide political, social, and economic horizons may push us toward progress and help us score winning points despite the great bitterness in the heart.

Before anything else, we should act to overcome the situation—something attainable only by those who can draw sharp distinctions between the less important things and the more important ones, and sometimes between trivial matters and great ones. We should engage in public and private debates, contacts, and reconciliations based on understanding not appeasement. We should coordinate our actions and join forces under a simple slogan; namely, that we are a nation worthy of living and must take our place in the future of human civilization, not just the past.

It is on this basis that Palestinian diplomacy is making its moves, opening its heart to Arab and international horizons, and skillfully continuing its message to clear the Arab air, firmly believing that the Palestinian cause, which is the essence of all Arab and Middle Eastern issues, needs common Arab effort, not harmful Arab fragmentation. It is also proceeding from this that the PLO, through Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], has gone all-out to rebuild the Arab position that appeared to be retreating because of the Gulf crisis and its developments. The PLO was eager to be at the center of a unified position by the frontline states—a position needed to deal seriously and effectively with peaceful plans and initiatives on the basis of the Arab interests and international resolutions and principles.

Although the PLO leadership has initiated intensive contacts with the frontline states and these contacts made good progress and success, the PLO has always been obsessed by the understanding that the Arab world is an integrated whole and that the position of the frontline states must lean on a more comprehensive Arab stand. This requires parallel intensive activity to clear the Arab air, without which the driving force capable of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region and the world cannot be established.

Hence comes the meetings of the president of the state of Palestine with the Egyptian prime minister in Libya, President Saddam Husayn in Baghdad, and King Husayn and his prime minister, Tahir al-Masri, in Jordan. And hence the meetings of the Palestinian leadership with the Egyptian foreign minister. These meetings are aimed at breaking the deadlock and, more importantly, helping clear the dust rising from the sands of the Gulf and its destructive crisis. They also constitute a reminder that reaching common denominators and drawing up a common Arab program of action dictate that we do overcome the situation we have talked about. This program of action does not exclude Iraq, nor does it divert attention from the fact that Iraq's force, in effect, is a power for the Arabs. The U.S. threats of a new war against Iraq if it fails to destroy its possible nuclear facilities must be linked to a clear and firm Arab demand that the United States and the world community take the same measure; namely destroy Israel's nuclear weapons. This is the road to true peace. There will be no peace with oppression, domination, and the use of countless standards.

*Cairo Sources: PLO Seeks More U.S. Meetings

91P40352A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Jul 91 p 3

[Excerpts] Cairo, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT bureau—The high-level Egyptian-Palestinian meeting in Libya has received positive reactions and interest on the Arab and international levels in that it was the first high-level Egyptian-Palestinian meeting attended by Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. It was the first meeting that the Arab

region has witnessed in ten months, despite recent meetings in Cairo. [passage omitted]

Sources said that 'Arafat will send a message to Cairo in order to overcome the trials through which Palestinian-Arab relations are passing and [to convey] his wish to come to Egypt to personally oversee the PLO's activities. The sources indicated that the Palestinians are seeking to intensify activities for Palestinian-U.S. meetings set up by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to bring their viewpoints closer together at this important stage. [passage omitted on other regional diplomatic activities]

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned from sources in Cairo that President Mubarak will receive a full report from Prime Minister Sidqi on his meeting with 'Arafat. The meeting took place at 'Arafat's request, which was personally conveyed by Colonel Qadhdhafi to Dr. 'Atif Sidqi upon Qadhdhafi's reception of the Egyptian delegation.

These sources noted that 'Arafat's meeting with the Egyptian prime minister is within a framework of intensified Palestinian activities which began after the liberation of Kuwait in order to restore relations with Egypt to their natural state. The Palestinian Central Council decided to create a Palestinian committee for this purpose headed by Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin), a member of the PLO's Executive Committee who has visited Egypt three times since the Gulf crisis. [passage omitted]

Algeria

Foreign Minister on Lebanon, Peace Process

LD1607220291 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Interview with Foreign Minister Lakhdar Ibrahimi—live]

[Excerpt] [Announcer] With me in the studio is His Excellency Foreign Minister Lakhdar Ibrahimi. After a tour to several Arab states, could we have a summing up?

[Ibrahimi] Good evening. I went to Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt. Lebanon was an official visit, and Jordan and Egypt were private and working visits.

Concerning Lebanon, Algeria contributed to the restoration of peace in that country. My first visit as foreign minister was this official one to Lebanon. What we saw in Lebanon is that the peace process is continuing, and it can be said that the Lebanese at least think that the war has ended and that what remains is the building of peace.

In Jordan I had the opportunity to exchange views with his majesty the king; his royal highness the crown prince; His Excellency Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri; and Jordan's new foreign minister.

In Egypt, we also met with His Excellency President Husni Mubarak; Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; and the secretary general of the Arab League. Discussion with all these was on bilateral relations, the Arab situation, and the concerns of the region.

[Announcer] Minister, let us return to Lebanon. You say that the Lebanese, at least, are prepared for peace, or that, as far as they are concerned, the war has ended [words indistinct]. But in Lebanon the Palestinian issue remains outstanding.

[Ibrahimi] The issue of the Palestinians—they have been in the south and in other places since 1948 as refugees, and they had an armed presence under the chaos which existed in Lebanon. They were aware of, and prepared to cooperate with, the new situation insofar as it concerned arms and their status. I think that there was a misunderstanding during the first two days of the Lebanese Army's deployment in the areas of the south, where there were armed Palestinians. After this misunderstanding, there was an appraisal of the situation, and I think that, generally, there are now serious attempts by the Palestinians and the Lebanese to contain the problem and solve the outstanding problems in a manner that satisfies the two sides.

[Announcer] Minister, what is Algeria's stance toward the regional or international conference?

[Ibrahimi] I think that what has been agreed upon by the parties that talked and negotiated on this subject is that the conference will be called a peace conference, neither regional nor international. Concerning Syria's agreement, I think that Syria has agreed on the holding of such a conference; the Arabs agreed a long time ago on a peaceful solution to the problem with Israel. I have not heard any details about the Israeli stance in the latest phase; the Israelis also rejected some aspects of the U.S. proposals. I do not know whether or not they have agreed.

[Announcer] Minister, (whether or not they have agreed), when I say regional or international conference, for example, the demand of the PLO and many Arab states including Algeria was for an international conference attended by the five permanent members of the Security Council...

[Ibrahimi, interrupting] ...No, no.

[Announcer] ...the Soviet Union, the PLO, and, of course, the other side. A regional one would be attended by Syria and Jordan, but perhaps not the Palestinians—in a conference devoted to them?

[Ibrahimi] I wish our television would give the listeners the correct news. I do not think that a conference in which the five permanent states participate was proposed. An international conference would be attended by the Soviet Union and the United States. Israel objected to the presence of the Soviet Union because it considered the USSR biased toward the Arabs. The situation in the Soviet Union has substantially changed, and Israel no longer objects to the participation of the Soviet Union. An international conference within the framework of the Security Council and the United Nations, and whether it would be continuous or not—these are the questions put forward in the recent period, and it seems that some compromise solutions have been found by the parties. I repeat, however, that I do not know what things Israel has agreed to and what it has not.

Concerning the PLO, it is no secret that the Israelis do not want it at any peace forum, while the Arabs are insisting that the Palestinian people be present and that the organization play a role. There is a search for solutions that might be acceptable to all the parties in this sphere—I repeat, the parties participating in these efforts.

[Announcer] [words indistinct] Are all the Arabs in full agreement that the Palestinians should be present on an independent basis?

[Ibrahimi] With deep regret, the Arabs differ fundamentally, not just about the Palestinian issue but... [changes thought] There is a multiparty, multifaceted schism in the Arab arena. Undoubtedly, the Palestinian issue is one of the victims of this schism.

[Announcer] Minister, under these circumstances, this schism you are talking about, is it appropriate and intelligent to place the issue of Palestine on an international or regional conference while we are in a position of weakness?

[Ibrahim] Look, the Palestinian brothers made their choice during the recent phase, that is, during the Palestine National Council which took place in Algiers in 1988, I think. They chose a peaceful solution, a historic compromise with Israel. Frankly, the peace process has in recent years been an Arab demand, and it has been primarily a Palestinian demand. The problem now is that the Arab side is indeed weak. How the Arabs and the Palestinians will deal with this problem... [changes thought] There is talk that there is now an international legitimacy, and we want it to be implemented. The Arabs are calling for the implementation of this international legitimacy on the issue of the Palestinian people and the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There are efforts being made here and there. Unfortunately, there are shortcomings and, possibly, coordination, but not at the level we had hoped. We hope that the circumstances will improve, however, and that cooperation among the Arabs will also improve. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Foreign Minister Speaks Upon Return From Kuwait

NC1707062992 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2355 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has emphasized that the time has come to start the Mideast peace process. He said that Egypt continues to call for convening a peace conference to begin moving toward a peaceful settlement to the crisis.

After returning from Kuwait this evening, Musa pointed out that Soviet President Gorbachev and U.S. President George Bush are likely to call for convening a conference on peace in the Middle East, and said that this affirms the Egyptian response. He added that time must not be wasted now that all Arab parties have declared their support for the U.S. initiative, and that we hope Israel will send a positive response so the peace process can start.

Musa noted that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit to Egypt and the region aims to advance the peace process and discuss how to achieve this goal.

Musa noted that the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers discussed the current situation in the Middle East in detail. He pointed out that these countries plan to hold several meetings to coordinate their policies and do what is necessary to expedite the declaration's implementation.

On the statement issued by the seven industrial countries, Musa said that the seven countries' role is extremely important, because they are effective powers on the international level and they support the Mideast peace process. He said that the failure to resolve this problem will have negative repercussions on the international development process.

Kuwaiti Deputy Chief of Staff Arrives

NC2607125892 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2404 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (MENA)—Staff Major General Jabir al-Khalid al-Sabah, deputy chief of staff of the Kuwaiti Army, arrived in Cairo this afternoon at the head of a delegation that will spend several days in Egypt.

Al-Sabah said he brings Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah's personal compliments to President Husni Mubarak, as well as a message to Egyptian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Muhammad Husayn Tantawi from his Kuwait counterpart, Shaykh 'Ali Salim al-Sabah.

He emphasized the continuous cooperation, coordination, and contacts between Egypt and Kuwait, and said that bilateral military cooperation is long-standing and continuing.

He said that through the cooperation of the Egyptian and Kuwaiti armies, a campaign has begun to cleanse Kuwait of the remains of the unjust aggression.

The Kuwaiti official noted that preliminary measures to rebuild the Kuwaiti Armed Forces will be implemented through cooperation with the Egyptian Armed Forces, which support Kuwait.

He said the Egyptian forces in Kuwait are treated as though they were Kuwaiti forces, adding that they are in excellent condition and their morale is extremely high.

He stressed that Kuwait will always remain the homeland of Arabs in which the Kuwaiti and the Arab will coexist.

AL-AHRAM Urges Ending Sanctions on Iraq

NC1707074992 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0623 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Cairo, 17 Jul (MENA)—In its editorial today, the newspaper AL-AHRAM called for lifting the economic sanctions against Iraq for the Iraqi people's sake.

The paper says that, although the Iraqi regime is largely responsible for the people's hardships, the Iraqi people are an Arab people after all.

It adds: In view of Egypt's leading position in the Arab homeland, we believe that the continuation of the embargo has become inhumane, particularly because Iraq was actually compelled to implement the UN Security Council resolutions after its defeat. Furthermore, the Iraqi people live under a despotic regime and cannot be held responsible for the regime's sins. The complete embargo imposed on Iraq is unprecedented and continuing it is unacceptable, particularly because Israel is committing atrocities greater than those perpetrated by Iraq but continues to escape punishment. Israel occupies Palestinian and Arab territories, refuses to sign UN Security Council and UN resolutions, produces nuclear

weapons, refuses to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, rejects international inspection of its nuclear facilities, and barbarically suppresses the Palestinian intifadah. It nevertheless receives economic and military aid and technical cooperation from the international community.

In conclusion, AL-AHRAM says that, if it is deemed necessary to continue the embargo on Iraq, the international community should impose the same conditions on other countries such as Israel to compel them to recognize the principles of legitimacy as was done for Iraq.

Opposition Parties Demand New Constitution

NC1607094391 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 9 Jul 91 p 1

[Statement issued by the leaders of the al-Wafd Party, Labor Party, National Progressive Unionist Grouping, Liberal Party, Muslim Brotherhood, Arab Socialist Party of Egypt, Greens Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Ummah Party, and Misr al-Fatah Party on 8 July in Cairo]

[Text] The Egyptian people are suffering because their basic needs are not being met. There is an imbalance between their limited incomes and skyrocketing prices. The purchasing power of the Egyptian pound is deteriorating. Unemployment is widespread. Public services are in shambles. Production is falling while bribery and corruption are rampant. The country is unable to attract investment to develop the national economy. Capital is fleeing the country. We depend on foreign countries for our necessities, and this affects our capacity for independent decisionmaking. These are the ominous signs which portend unspeakable disasters, unless we hasten to cure this deteriorating situation by reforming this country's system of government as a prelude to economic reform.

The existing Constitution, designed by late President Anwar al-Sadat, concentrates all the power of the state in the hands of a single ruler who is unanswerable to the representatives of the people. The people must be the source of all power, but the current Constitution has weakened constitutional institutions as well as popular participation. The Constitution has enabled the ruling authority to falsify the people's will in general elections and to employ methods of terror to rule the country by emergency law.

Reforming this defective political system is only possible by introducing real democracy. This popular demand is not particular to this country, but is a part of an international trend that has gained force in today's world, in Asia, Latin America, the Soviet Union, East Europe, and Africa.

To achieve political reform, a new constitution must be drawn up on the basis of the following 10 principles:

First: Upholding the human rights and the general freedoms that are recognized by Islamic law and international conventions. The citizen's dignity should be respected, and no citizen should be tortured. It is not permissible to restrict any citizen's personal freedom, enter his house, tap his telephone, or open his mail without a court warrant valid for a limited duration. Citizens have the right to hold public meetings and to organize peaceful demonstrations, and all laws restricting such rights should be abolished. Any violation of these rights should be considered a crime superseding the statute of limitations, and any such crime justifies immediate court action and need not wait for a waiver of Parliamentary immunity.

Second: Defining the precise conditions under which a state of emergency can be declared. The declaration and renewal of the state of emergency should be limited to a specific duration; it should not be declared without strong justification and should remain a temporary, not indefinite, measure. In any other case, the ensuing atmosphere of anxiety can only destroy the public's sense of confidence and security. Clause 74 of the Constitution, which grants the president of the republic the right to take exceptional measures if the country's safety is endangered, should be abolished. The general rules governing a state of emergency declared under specific conditions suffice to serve this clause's purpose. Clause 74 has been abused in the past, for example, when the late President al-Sadat passed the September 1981 decisions.

Third: Endorsing the freedom to form political parties. Political parties should have the right to begin their activities once they notify the competent authorities of their establishment without waiting for any form of official approval.

Fourth: Guaranteeing the integrity of elections and public referendums. Elections should be free, not rigged, and public authorities should not interfere in their execution. The judiciary should monitor the elections, ensure that only qualified voters are allowed to vote, and guarantee that these voters sign a register at the polling centers.

Fifth: Adopting a parliamentary system of government, based on separating the powers of the president of the republic from those of the executive branch. The executive branch should be led by a government representing the parliamentary majority, and the government should be answerable to the elected representatives of the people. Should these representatives withdraw their confidence from the government, the latter should resign immediately, without making objections or posing hindrances.

Sixth: Acknowledging the right of the People's Assembly to amend the state budget. The Consultative Council should also be given the power to make legislation and monitor the government's performance in cooperation with the People's Assembly. Otherwise, that council should be annulled.

Seventh: The president of the republic should be selected from several candidates through direct, general elections. The president should not serve for more than two consecutive terms and should relinquish his party membership upon election and refrain from party activities for the duration of his term in office.

The senior ulema committee should be revived and should elect the man to fill the post of al-Azhar shaykh. University personnel should elect university directors, deputy directors, and college deans, who should subsequently relinquish their party affiliations.

Eighth: Clearing anything violating Islamic doctrine from the existing laws. Asserting a commitment to the rights of non-Muslims to practice their beliefs, organize their affairs related to marriage, and select their spiritual leaders.

Ninth: Establishing the general authority of the judiciary in deciding all disputes and conflicts, including cases in which the regularity of parliamentary elections is disputed. This entails abolishing the Socialist Public Prosecutor Office, the Ethical Court, the State Security Court, the Parties Court. Military courts should only try cases involving discipline within the Armed Forces.

Tenth: Recognizing the right of individuals, political parties, and legal entities to issue and own newspapers. The press authority law which established the Higher Press Council should be abrogated, and the media institutions supervised by this council should become independent. Radio and television should also be freed from supervision, to ensure that their reporting is neutral and comprehensive. Such a move will enhance equal opportunity among political parties.

Such constitutional reform necessitates creating a new constitution to replace the existing one. Speaking on behalf of the Egyptian people, we call for the election of a constituent assembly to formulate this new constitution based on the above principles. This constitution should then be submitted to the nation for endorsement through a public referendum. The constituent assembly should be elected in accordance with a new law regulating political rights which should put the judiciary in charge of supervising elections. The law should also include guarantees for free elections similar to those included in the draft law the opposition parties presented to the president on 19 June 1990.

A selected group of legal and political experts of various party affiliations has formulated a draft constitution in accordance with these principles which will serve as a working paper to be debated by parties, syndicates, various associations and societies, the media, various intellectuals and experts, and at the universities. The results of this debate should be presented to the constituent assembly when it assumes its historic task of giving Egypt a new constitution.

The time is right for the Egyptian people to restore their right to real democracy and to choose their representatives free from pressure, intimidation, or fraud. Such a step is necessary if our people are to deal with the existing crises and find solutions to their problems, both internal and external.

We implore God almighty to grant President Muhammad Husni Mubarak success in making the promises of comprehensive change he made to the Egyptian people come true. The desired reform should take place in an atmosphere of amity, stability, and security, and we are eager to promote such an atmosphere in this difficult and crucial phase in our region's history. We urge unity in the face of all challenges.

Editor Rejects Demands

NC1607192791 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 12 Jul 91 pp 4-9

[Article by Chief Editor Makram Muhammad Ahmad: "The Egyptian Parties' Leaders.. and Lessons To Be Learned From the Algerian Crisis and its Deep Roots"]

[Text] Suddenly, as if drawing inspiration from the error that occurred in Algeria, the leaders of the Egyptian political parties came up with a statement demanding some political reform. Perhaps no one would dispute that these reforms are necessary if they are carried out in a mature and rational way that guarantees that this peaceful country continues along the path of full democracy, without retrogression that undermines the stability of society and drives it to the brink of chaos.

In their statement, the party leaders demanded a new constitution, called for abolishing the emergency law, and asked that the president be stripped of his powers to declare extraordinary measures when the homeland's safety is threatened. The statement also included a more detailed list of political reform demands which they see as necessary conditions to confront the economic crisis. They do not believe a proper solution will be found for the economy until total democracy is achieved in Egypt!!

We might dispute the right of some of the party leaders who signed this statement to speak on behalf of the nation; some of them cannot even persuade five other people to adopt their views. Some of these people have turned their party into the equivalent of a furnished apartment that can be rented by anyone at the right price, some of them change their principles faster than they could change clothes and have moved from one ideological extreme to the other so abruptly that is arouses suspicion, and some have included in their ranks a party that has not demonstrated a sincere belief in democratic principles.

We might dispute the right of some of these party leaders to speak on behalf of the nation because they lead fragile, feeble, and weak-rooted parties that have contradictory goals and lack unity. That is not, however, our objective. Our objective is to ask those party leaders what they can

do with their fragile, feeble parties if a retreat from the democratic process takes place, as happened in Algeria. In cases like that some parties simply abandon the rules of democracy if tempted by a suitable opportunity to resort to violent means to seize power.

What can these leaders do against existing forces that operate clandestinely and who believe that the only solution is to destroy society's security for the sake of establishing a new totalitarian regime that wears the guise of religion, opposes democracy and political pluralism, and considers them imported creations?

What can these people do if we strip the president of his power to adopt extraordinary measures to safeguard the homeland's security and hope that they will bring out their abundant party forces to guard our "incomplete democracy" against such an expected aggression? What will happen if the results are disappointing, if the party leaders and their masses do not materialize and we are left to flounder in overwhelming chaos?

I am not fond of being a fault-finder or of casting stones. Nevertheless, I wish to state clearly and frankly that creating full democracy does not come merely through reformulating articles of the constitution but through the maturity of party work and party institutions. The parties must demonstrate their ability to guarantee and protect a safe and smooth transition that will enable society to attain full democracy, particularly when society is being subjected to almost daily aggression by terrorist groups who are linked by mysterious and vague relations with one of the most effective political trends in Egypt.

I read the statement issued by the Egyptian party leaders very carefully and I sympathize with some of their demands. But had they taken a careful look at what is happening in the world today they might have understood facts that they should not have missed, facts that would have placed their demands within the framework of a realistic vision of the world's requirements and conditions.

They are talking about the need to complete political reform as a precondition for economic reform when, in fact, the two issues have never been related.

In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev gave the demands for political reform precedence over those for economic reform. What happened? The glue holding this huge empire together broke down and the Soviet Union was ripped apart under the pressure of its numerous nationalities and the ambitions of sectors with conflicting interests. The ship's captain lost the helm, chaos spread to the production and distribution establishments, strikes by miners and railroad workers increased, and everybody complained about "glasnost," which released long-silent tongues but could not guarantee bread. The long lines in front of empty shops have become the new symbol of the Soviet Union.

The opposite happened in China. Political reform preceded economic reform, the result being the horrific clash over freedom between the authorities and the students in Tiananmen Square.

What took place in Egypt was different. Political reform moved alongside economic reform with a realistic view that took into consideration social peace, the conditions of low-income groups, and the fears that might result from sudden changes among broadly based classes whose life circumstances are linked to the huge expansion in the public sector.

Political reform coincided with economic reform for another reason, namely because of Egypt's need for the stability and security required to attract foreign investment, which has covered many types of economic activity and can become a factor in helping Egyptian capital contribute more to development projects.

The statement denies or ignores the magnitude of the changes that have occurred in Egypt since 1981. Anyone can see the enormous change that has quietly occurred in Egypt in the last decade. This change has maintained a course of well-balanced political reforms as it proceeds toward true democracy safeguarded by a free press, an independent judiciary, and more honest parliamentary representation. The change maintains for the society a well-balanced course as it moves from a guided economy, in which the state controlled most of its activities, to economic liberalization, which the opportunists and sycophants exploited at the beginning. It also ensures all the guarantees of safety and security for the serious investor, be they Egyptian, Arab, or foreign, providing an opportunity for new manufacturers to emerge. We take pride that these new manufacturers' products are better than imported products.

I can cite hundreds of examples of this.

It is regrettable that in their statement, the party leaders ignore these facts in order to make everybody believe that the suffering of Egyptian society is rooted in the recent past. The statement's lies are so great that it denies Egypt's enormous and persistent political and economic reforms. To top it off, the party leaders ignored the facts of history when they denounced al-Sadat's constitution "because it has vested all the state's powers in an irresponsible autocrat." They ignore that al-Sadat's constitution opened the way for moving from a totalitarian society to a multiple party system 15 years before this stormy wind that came with Gorbachev blew down the theory of one-party rule and totalitarianism.

The most dangerous mistake in the statement was the way it underestimated Egypt's problems, which grew during the huge development process in Egyptian society over the past half-century.

In their statement, the party leaders speak about Egypt today as if it were Egypt of the 1940's, when poverty, ignorance, and sickness prevailed. Decent human life

was confined to a small segment of the population of 20 million people, most of whom lived outside society.

As Egypt grew so did its problems. Egypt's 60 million people live on its limited resources, which can not meet every Egyptian's aspirations for a better life.

The concern today in Egypt is not whether political reform should come before economic reform.

The concern today in Egypt is not whether to guarantee the right to strike or to demonstrate. We know what strikes have done in Poland, in the Soviet Union, and before that in Italy. We know that he who advocates the right to strike should also accept the right to be locked out.

The concern in Egypt today can be summed up in one statement: ensuring the smooth and secure transition to full democracy. This democracy will provide stability and open the door for producers to increase their capacity to meet society's increasing demands.

The secure transition to full democracy is not carried out by bypassing or ignoring current problems; it is not guaranteed by changing the constitution. What is required is responsible parties that have deep roots in Egyptian society, that know how to arrange the nation's priorities, and that are linked by national interest to protect the democratic process from those lying in wait. Regrettably, our Egyptian parties are still a long way from reaching these noble aims.

The leaders of the Egyptian parties, who are inspired by the mistakes in Algeria, should correctly understand the lessons there. The need to understand that a new constitution is not the solution; that the essence and heart of the issue is a smooth democratic process in which all parties are committed and none would do anything to harm society.

We should all pay attention to the clash between the Islamic trend and the army in Algeria and wake up and understand our true priorities.

Some groups in Egypt gave ideas similar to those of the Islamic fundamentalists in Algiers.

A group stressed respect for democracy, acceptance of the rules of legitimacy, and the need to resort to the ballot box to ensure a secure transition of authority through constitutional establishments based on a correct representation of the masses and free and honest elections.

This group could have come out as a political party under the name of "The Salvation Front" after the economic and political reform movements carried out by President Chadli Bendjedid when, in the wake of the bloody clashes of 1988, he announced a new ruling system based on party pluralism and a new constitution that guaranteed public freedoms, including freedom of the press. Algerians were also given the right to organize in political parties that were to compete for power.

Even though the law on parties stressed that no religion-based party would be allowed, the Salvation Front was recognized and within three years it became the largest, strongest, and most influential opposition party.

Under the wing of this trend a number of more extreme religious groups, who operated clandestinely, began adopting violent actions against a society they deemed infidel and unreformable. They believed that the correct "Islamic solution" lay in undermining and demolishing the society.

What is strange is that these groups adopted the same names used by extremist groups in Egypt, such as "al-Jihad" and "The Society of Repudiation and Renunciation." They used the same terrorist methods against Algerian society, using physical and moral coercion to impose a stringent code of behavior which focuses on personal appearance, requiring women to wear the veil and men to wear loose garments. The group called modern civilization an innovation and an aberration and said that democracy was a corrupt Western product. They believed that the only way a correct system of government under Islam could be established was through a single party, God's party, and that other parties were necessarily of the devil.

Just as in Egypt, the relationship between the overt trend, which became a political party, and these extremist groups—consisting of younger members—remained mysterious and vague. Sometimes violent battles erupted between the followers of the two trends in universities or mosques, often escalating to the use of chains and knives. The groups always agreed on one point, however: that they were two branches of the same general trend the ultimate goal of which was to establish an autocratic religious government using the Iranian revolution as a model.

What makes this relationship still more mysterious is the fact that the followers of the overt group, who had declared their acceptance of democracy as a system of government, always avoided condemning the acts of the extremist groups, even when they hurt people or struck at the very core of democracy. The most that the "Islamic democrats" said was that the perpetrators were "young men who had an excuse; they had suffered; they lacked good examples; and, ultimately, they are the soldiers of the Islamic awakening. Their only mistake is their impatience."

During Algeria's recent crisis, these groups came together. There was no longer any difference between the policies of the overt group and the policies of the clandestine organizations.

Abassi Madani began the violence by declaring holy jihad against the Algerian Army when it came out to the streets after weeks of chaos. His deputy, 'Ali Belhadj, urged Salvation Front supporters to stockpile weapons in preparation for a decisive battle with the Algerian Army. The more extreme groups kidnapped and assassinated members of the Algerian Army. The Army discovered hundreds of Molotov

cocktails and dozens of weapons in the municipalities under Salvation Front control or in mosques that were turned into fortresses by front supporters.

What caused this unity among the overt groups and the clandestine ones? Why did the two sides risk the discovery of their close relationship?

The Salvation Front reaped the benefits for coming out in favor of democracy. It became the strongest party in the country in the wake of the Liberation Front's crisis. The Liberation Front suffered from an intellectual crisis resulting from its failure to catch up with world developments that exposed the futility of one-party, totalitarian systems. In addition, it clearly failed to bring about real progress in its society due to the state's control of all aspects of economic activity and the meager democratic rights individuals were given.

The Liberation Front, which has ruled Algeria since independence, also suffered a crisis of individuals that resulted from the constant struggles that made the front lose its cadres. Its bloated party structure and the appearance of new groups with their own special interests, most of whom were government bureaucrats who were interested only in maintaining the status quo, also contributed to the problems.

The Salvation Front achieved big gains which became doubly important because of the division within the bloated ruling party. Even though the Salvation Front suffered from its inability to manage the municipalities under its control, and even though it lost part of its allure and some of its credibility, it was the strongest party in the country. It could have had the largest representation, after the ruling party, in the National Assembly despite its objection to the elections and constituencies' laws. It even could have competed with the Liberation Front in the National Assembly.

Why, then, this retreat from the democratic option?

Abassi Madani was most likely hoping to get an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly elections and rule Algeria alone. When he saw that this was not going to happen, he decided to break the rules of the democratic game. He called for violence and tried to break the Algerian Army in the hope of breaking down the last barrier that prevented him from reaching power.

This opinion is supported by the events in Algeria since the outbreak of the crisis when the Salvation Front called for a general strike. The events culminated in Abassi Madani's call for jihad against the Army, which took to the streets to restore security after weeks of chaos. What this means is that the Salvation Front's acceptance of democracy was, from the outset, temporary, something that was relinquished when the front felt it could assume the mantle of power.

I do not agree with those who say that the clandestine organizations are actually the military wings of these overt groups. Perhaps there is some evidence to support this claim.

I do not want to believe that there is a conspiracy, but I do wish to say clearly—in light of the course of events in Algeria and the public announcements made by Abassi Madani and his deputy, Ali Belhadj—that the Algerian crisis reveals that the Salvation Front was not sincere when it announced its commitment to democracy. It did not do so out of a genuine conviction of the democracy option as a system of government and life that should be continued and enhanced. Rather it did so because it viewed the democratic option as an available tool to be used temporarily until it could seize the reigns of government, even if that meant the loss of legitimacy and required the use of violence and confrontation.

The proponents of political Islam have lived the major part of their lives rejecting partisanship, seeing it as an evil. In their written literature, the Islamic Brotherhood Movement in Egypt has never even hinted that they would accept a dialogue about some of its positive aspects. If these confrontations have shown them the dangers of this course of events and forced them to accept the multiparty system, it would only be a temporary, practical position that would not reflect a genuine belief in democracy.

This alone explains their great concern for the vague relationship between terrorism and extremist organizations. The roots of this relationship became evident only at the peak of the crisis.

This alone explains their great interest to use democracy to contribute to the undermining of the society's institutions, to close every window of light to its path, to terrorize everyone by leveling charges of rebellion and atheism at any opposing opinion, and to devote their political words to undermining the existing situation without providing a better alternative.

The political dispute in Algeria over the election and division of constituencies was not an excuse for staging an all-out strike, or preventing municipal workers and garbage collectors from performing their task. The Algerian capital was almost drowning in hills of garbage. Furthermore, the dispute was not an excuse for carrying out acts of violence and sabotage against the state's institutions, or for instigating their supporters to clash with the Army and destroy its tanks. Abassi Madani publicly called for taking up arms and declaring jihad. Perhaps the new election law came to rectify wrong situations, particularly when it canceled the right to vote by proxy. Perhaps the Salvation Front was right to criticize the provisions of the law pertaining to the division of constituencies. But this problem could have been solved through dialogue and not through an all-out strike forcibly imposed by the front.

Let's ask ourselves: What have the Islamists in Algeria accomplished by their sudden deviation from democracy? The Army had to go to the streets to impose order and security after weeks of chaos. The Algerian Army was the only group that won the support of the Algerian people because it quelled the revolt, held off the ghost of civil war, protected the state's institutions, unveiled the intentions of violence, and took it upon itself to guard the state's progress, even after its tanks withdrew from the streets.

Would this help ensure a safe passage from the transition period to that of pluralism? Maybe. The Algerian Army, undoubtedly, will continue to control Algeria's domestic policy. And this was one of the reckless games led by Abassi Madani.

It would have been better for the leaders of the Egyptian parties to learn the lesson of Algeria and realize that the main concern in Egypt today can be summed up in one sentence: To ensure a safe transfer to complete democracy without turning back the hands of time.

Libya

Al-Bishari on Ties with Egypt, U.S., UK

PM1707083091 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 13 Jul 91 pp 1, 4

[Interview with Ibrahim al-Bishari, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation, by Randah Taqiy al-Din in Paris on 12 July]

[Text] [Taqiy al-Din] Sudanese leader Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir has told AL-HAYAH that Sudan has not received a detailed report on Libya's mediation between Sudan and Egypt. Why is that?

[Al-Bishari] The somewhat tense Egyptian-Sudanese relations were discussed in depth during Colonerl Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's visit to Khartoum last week. The same topic was discussed with President Husni Mubarak during our visit to Alexandria. At these two meetings agreement was reached on a number of practical measures to resolve some of the complexities in these relations. We noticed that our Egyptian brothers have some doubts and some observations which they regard as essential, but on the other hand we found the Sudanese side willing to improve these relations and to develop them in the interest of the two countries, which have common boundaries, history, and interests and ties dating back a long time. I believe there will be some movement on that matter in the coming weeks.

[Taqiy al-Din] Have you ascertained this with Egyptian officials?

[Al-Bishari] Yes. Our brothers in Egypt have been quite clear on this matter. Colonel al-Qadhdhafi is mediating personally and we are certain the results will be positive, but it is far too early to talk about expected steps.

[Taqiy al-Din] What do you mean when you say that the Egyptians have some observations and doubts?

[Al-Bishari] They believe believe that there is some fundamentalist activity emanating from Sudan in the direction of Egypt and that there may be some connection between members of the fundamentalist organizations in Egypt and Sudan. The matter revolves around these issues. The Sudanese officials deny that and say they neither work against Egypt nor have links with the fundamentalists in Egypt, and they maintain that they have neither the ability nor the desire to indulge in that kind of activity.

[Taqiy al-Din] Will Libyan-Sudanese integration affect Libyan-Egyptian relations?

[Al-Bishari] We believe that Egypt, Libya, and Sudan form the golden triangle of the Arab nation. These three states fully complement one another and they have great manpower reserves and great agricultural capabilities. Libya has oil, gas, and financial resources. If we put all these resources together we would be able to create an integrated Arab entity that would mean progress for the Arab nation, particularly if that entity integrates with the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA]. Libyan-Sudanese integration is in the interest of Egypt, with which we have scores of very fruitful integration agreements. A Libyan now has the right to travel to Egypt without a passport and to reside, own property, and work there, and Egyptians have the same reciprocal rights in Libya. The borders are open and interests are interlinked. The same things apply to Libya and Sudan. The truth is that Egypt and Sudan cannot do without one another. What is currently taking place between Egypt and Sudan is just a summer cloud.

[Taqiy al-Din] Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali said yesterday that Sudan was one of the states which encouraged fundamentalist movements. What do you think of that, and how do you explain the fact that Libya is the only Arab Maghreb state which does not have a problem with fundamentalist movements?

[Al-Bishari] We should not speak of fundamentalist movements in the Arab Maghreb. There are political movements seeking to reach power. These movements are a product of an accumulation of factors resulting from the economic crises in these states, the absence of a strong Arab plan, and the lack of Arab unity. They have received aid from foreign quarters which also helped to train their members (in Afghanistan for example) in acts of violence, sobotage, and terrorism. The main aim of these movements is to seize power. I am not so sure that Sudan encourages these movements.

There is no fundamentalist phenomenon in Libya. The Libyan people have no economic crisis, no social crisis, and no government crisis. There is no logical or historical reason for that devilish phenomenon to appear.

[Taqiy al-Din] It seems that there are some major problems between the Arab Maghreb states. What can you tell us about the current phase?

[Al-Bishari] The UMA is still at the beginning of the road. It represents the wills of five independent states trying to implement the union's programs in a way that will ultimately lead to a merger. When you talk about five political wills, it is natural for occasional collisions to occur. The problems, if any, are minor and our leaders are capable of solving them. The UMA has been influenced to a large extent by the mechanism used to achieve European unity. At the recent Ra's al-Unuf summit, Libya proposed an amendent of the treaty to strengthen the union's presidency and open borders to free movement of citizens. The possibility of having a unified bank and monetary unity is currently under study. We already said that the Arab Economic Unity Agreement of 1957 could be used as a basis for this, inasmuch as we already signed it within the Arab League context. The same applies to the Arab Joint Defense Pact.

[Taqiy al-Din] Have you received any promises from Egypt that it will ask the United States and perhaps Britain to improve their relations with Libya?

[Al-Bishari] Egyptian-Libyan ties are very special. After the difficulties which appeared in this connection, we are convinced that it is important to maintain integration between the two countries. Accordingly, Egypt has every right to do what it considers to be in Libya's interest, such as seeking to improve U.S.-Libyan relations if it deems it important.

[Taqiy al-Din] But have you asked Egypt to do that?

[Al-Bishari] We believe that the United States is an important state, and it would be natural to have good relations with it, provided it respects our national options and independence. We want normal relations with that country, without preconditions. President Husni Mubarak is making efforts in that respect.

[Taqiy al-Din] Will he ask the prime of Britain, where he is scheduled to visit 23 July?

[Al-Bishari] I do not know if he intends to discuss this matter with the British, but I do know that he will raise it with the United States.

[Taqiy al-Din] What happened with Britain?

[Al-Bishari] One day British Member of Parliament Terry Taylor came to me and said that he wished to make a personal effort for the restoration of Libyan-British relations, that he had raised the issue with the British prime minister and foreign secretary, and that they appreciated his endeavor. He wrote me a personal letter dealing specifically with the following two issues: the issue of the British policewoman who was killed while on guard duty at the Libyan Embassy in London, and the issue of the Irish. I in turn sent him a personal letter of reply expressing my regret at the death of the policewoman. I said that the Libyan authorities decided to donate 250,000 pounds sterling to the British police fund as aid, not as compensation or assistance for policemen killed in the line of duty. I also said to him that the Irish people were entitled to self-determination, but that we did not support the IRA and had no links with it. The British member of Parliament considered that Libyan position sufficient. Then we discussed the question of the British hostages held in Lebanon, particularly since we have contributed in the past to the release of a number of Swiss and French hostages. As far as we are concerned, it is a matter of principle. Terry Waite was a friend of Libya's and he visited us several times. We appreciate that man's plight and if we could make efforts for his release and the release of all the Western hostages, we would not hesitate to do so. Meanwhile, I have no information about the reasons for the British Foreign Office's reluctance and its assertion that what Libya offered was insufficient, despite the fact that we have demonstrated goodwill and the fact that British interests in Libya are greater than Libyan interests in Britain.

[Taqiy al-Din] But have you started your efforts for Terry Waite's release?

[Al-Bishari] Yes, we have, on a humanitarian basis. Col. al-Qadhdhafi has called for the release of some hostages. That call still stands. We are making direct efforts in the interest of the hostages.

[Taqiy al-Din] The French president has spoken of a Maghreb-European summit in Tunisia next January. What is Libya's view?

[Al-Bishari] Our relations with France are good and improving. We will soon address an invitation to President Mitterrand to attend with us the celebration marking the flow of the great artifical river water to the North in August.

As regards a Mediterranean summit, we favor such a meeting. Our brothers in Tunisia have held consultations with us on that. Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi will participate in it. It will be preceded by a ministerial conference in October in Algeria. Libya believes that the framework including the South Mediterranean states is very adequate and could be a framework for North-South cooperation for peace and the settlement of many question.

[Taqiy al-Din] Does Abdelmoumen Diouri have links with Libyan intelligence, as claimed by French Interior Minister Philippe Marchand?

[Al-Bishari] We have investigated this matter and could not establish any link between him and any official Libyan organ whatsoever.

Remarks by U.S. Envoy Termed 'Suspicious'

LD1607211891 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] U.S. Ambassador to Italy Peter Secchia said that the borders of the West have changed and that NATO's center of attraction has moved from Berlin to Italy. He said in an interview with CORRIERE DELLA SERA

that the Arab nation is on the side facing Sicily. Therefore, Italy will experience a great increase in cooperation with the U.S. military because of its proximity to the regions of strong interaction.

The U.S. ambassador to Italy stressed that military relations between his country and Italy are excellent and that Italy will have first place among the European countries in relations with the United States.

JANA's political editor described the U.S. ambassador's remarks as a new indication that the conflict between East and West will become a conflict between North and South. The political editor noted that the U.S. ambassador to Italy used a colonial tone in his statement when he focused on the importance of military cooperation with Italy and did not point out the importance of cultural and economic cooperation, and the consolidation of peace and security between the people of the regions.

The editor warned the Arab masses against suspicious schemes under a policy of threats and the change of orientation of the conflict from East against West to North against South.

Liaison Secretary Receives Soviet Ambassador

LD1007094891 Tripoli JANA in English 0832 GMT 10 Jul 91

[Text] Tripoli, Al-Nasser [July] 10th, 91, JANA/ARAB MAGHREB UNION POOL—The secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation received on Monday the credentials of Mr. V. Popov, the new ambassador to Great al-Jamahiriya of the Soviet Union.

In his talk, Mr. Popov has relayed the greeting of the Soviet President Gorbachev to the leader of the revolution and the Libyan Arab people pointing out that the ties between his country and Great al-Jamahiriya were developed after the advent of the great al-Fatih revolution at all levels.

He added that the furtherance of democracy and the reforms taking place in the administrative and economic frameworks in the Soviet Union tie up considerable with the people's power starting in great al-Jamahiriya under the leadership of Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. He said that they in the Soviet Union feel comfortable vis-a-vis the closeness in the stances assumed by the two countries in relation to a great number of matters worldwide.

He concluded that he would make every endeavour to promote the relations between the two countries for the common interests of the two peoples wishing the leader of the revolution in person all success and happiness and all welfare and progress to the friendly Libyan Arab people.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Arrives in Tripoli

LD1607204791 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0750 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Brother 'Ali Sahlul, Sudanese foreign minister, arrived in Tripoli yesterday evening to chair a meeting of Sudan's ambassadors to the Arab Maghreb Union and Egypt which will be held in Tripoli. In a statement to JANA, brother Sahlul said: My visit falls within the framework of the meeting of Sudan's ambassadors accredited to the Arab Maghreb Union and Egypt. The Great Jamahiriyah was chosen as a venue for this meeting because the Jamahiriyah and Sudan are one country and [word indistinct] we feel as if we were in Khartoum. The foreign minister in sister Sudan called on the Arab nation to oppose the plans aimed at subjugating the Iraqi people, humiliating them, and depriving them of all technological means in order to impose the U.S. plan on the Arab nation.

Economic, Social Agreement Signed With Cyprus

LD1507044491 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 14 Jul 91

[Text] The minutes of the first meeting of the Arab Libyan- Cypriot committee for economic and social cooperation were signed yesterday in Nicosia. The minutes included cooperation in the fields of commerce, industry, petroleum, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, transport, communications, social security, tourism, vocational training, and banking. The minutes also included cooperation in the fields of information and culture.

The minutes were signed by the brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Light Industries and by George Sirimis, the Cypriot finance minister.

Tax, Customs Agreement Signed With Saudi Arabia

LD1607130791 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1015 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Riyadh, 16 Jul (JANA)—An agreement on reciprocal exemption from taxes and customs duties on the activities of the Saudi and Libyan airlines and the supplies needed to operate them was signed in Riyadh yesterday afternoon by the great Jamahiriyah and Saudi Arabia. The agreement exempts Libyan Arab Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines from the taxes and customs duties hitherto in force in the two countries and also exempts the employees of the two companies working in the other country from paying taxes on their vehicles.

Furthermore, all transported property which either of the two airlines brings into the country of the other contracting party is exempt from all taxes and customs duties.

This agreement contributes to the consolidation of the brotherly relations between the great Jamahiriyah and Saudi Arabia as part of the effort to achieve comprehensive Arab solidarity.

Cooperation Protocol Signed With Spain

LD1607100291 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 2200 GMT 15 Jul 91

[Text] A protocol of agreement between the Great Jamahiriyah and Spain was signed yesterday at the headquarters of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The protocol, signed by the brother secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation, and Spanish Foreign Minister Fernandez- Ordonez, includes an agreement to hold the fourth session of the Libyan Arab-Spanish Joint Committee. The protocol also includes a draft agreement on reciprocal investments, which will be signed soon.

The secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation said his talks with Spanish officials had covered preparations for the holding of a meeting between the Arab Maghreb Union and the states of southwest Europe, that is, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal.

Reportage on Industry Minister's Visit to Cyprus

WA1607193591

For reportage on the visit by Dr. Fathi Hamad Ibn-Shatwan, secretary of the General People's Committee in charge of light industry, including reports on his talks with Cypriot Foreign Minister Yeoriyos Iakovou, please see the Cyprus section of the 12 July West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Morocco

Dailies Condemn French 'Interference' Over Sahara

LD1707085391 Rabat MAP in English 1321 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Rabat, 16 July (MAP)—"If the 'vigilance committee' sponsored by Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand (spouse of the president of France) was earnestly keen on making useful and objective work, it would rather be concerned about the fate of the sequestered Sahrawis and intervene so that they be released and allowed to join their relatives and live with their co-citizens", writes today "LE MATIN DU SAHARA ET DU MAGHREB".

For the Moroccan pro-governmental daily any other intervention would only come to "an injustifiable, indecent and unacceptable interference" in Morocco's affairs.

The daily's editorialist sees that members and organizations forming the committee have never hidden their hostility towards Morocco and that their writings and statements systematically ran down Morocco's policy, both national and international and permanently criticize the kingdom's regime and institutions.

"The least one can say is that the objectivity of this committee is more than doubtful", the daily says adding that the committee members consider the Sahara "a colonial territory" and that its "inhabitants need tutorship, assistance and protection" forgetting the fact "the Saharan provinces have never been autonomous and have never been claimed by neighboring countries". These provinces have always been Moroccan since Morocco has come to exist as a nation in the 12th century.

The editorialist points out further that the referendum consultations similar to the ones projected in the Sahara were previously held in various parts of the world under the supervision of the UN, and the UN alone, without any vigilance committees.

The editorialist sees the creation of the "vigilance committee" as a mere interference in Morocco's affairs, a provocation act and a foreign intervention aimed at kindling an anti-Moroccan subversive campaign.

"This interference is intolerable and unacceptable and might besides disturb the refendum proceedings and even foil the whole un-sponsored process which stipulates that Morocco alone is in charge of the territory's running and security", the daily says.

One has the right to wonder whether foiling the referendum is not the aim sought by the so-called vigilance committee as all its members perfectly know that the outcome will be in favor of Morocco, the daily points out.

Another Moroccan opposition daily "L'OPINION" also comments on the anti-Moroccan campaigns particularly in France saying "the Moroccan people is determined to foil any plots and to win the new battle, that of territorial integrity and Moroccanity of the Sahara".

"The main aim of the architects of the campaign, headed by Mrs. Mitterrand, is to deal a blow to Morocco's sovereignty and independence and prevent it from perfecting its territorial integrity", the daily says asserting that Moroccans will never accept a foreign interference in their internal affairs.

Sudan

Al-Bashir on Ties With Egypt, Domestic Scene

PM1607144091 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Jul 91 p 4

[Report on interview with President Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, by Mu'awiyah Yasin in Khartoum; date not given]

[Text] Sudanese President Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir has said that his country sensed a coolness in relations with Egypt following the announcement of integration between Libya and Sudan and the eruption of the Gulf crisis—which led to the deterioration of relations to their "lowest level."

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir told AL-HAYAH that Sudan tried hard to keep silent about the Egyptian media campaigns against his country and the "defamation attempts by the media and the Egyptian authorities themselves." He pointed out that his government was happy to send its envoys to Cairo to safeguard and improve relations, "but we were surprised recently by operations to expel Sudanese citizens, and we do not yet know the reason for it."

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir denied that trying to use the "hot line" between Cairo and Khartoum could influence the present situation in Egyptian-Sudanese relations, but he believes it is possible to improve them "if the efforts being made by (Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar) al-Qadhdhafi succeed."

He pointed out to AL-HAYAH that his government has still not received a full report on the efforts being made by Col. al-Qadhdhafi with officials in Egypt in this regard.

With regard to Egyptian officials' accusations against Sudan that it is training Egyptian Islamic extremists, the Sudanese president said: "We have no link with political organizations in Egypt, nor are we bound even by personal relations with the leaderships of the Islamic organizations in Egypt." He attributed these accusations to "the campaign against Sudan's Islamic tendency and the attempt to distort it by accusing us of training Islamic elements."

He revealed that his government invited Egyptian officials "to visit the areas where they claim that our government is training the Islamists."

He also emphasized that "Egypt possesses complete information about all Egyptian citizens who enter Sudan and the nature of their visit."

With regard to the National Islamic Front elements' domination of government and executive posts, Lt. Gen. al-Bashir said: There are certain leading posts which we offer only to persons who believe in the revolution's orientations and who are enthusiastic about its program, regardless of their partisan affiliations." He added that those affiliated with previous party tendencies have obtained their share in the present government, and "we do not recognize parties and are governed only by loyalty to the National Salvation Revolution."

He pointed out that all Sudanese citizen attaining the age of 18 are regarded—by virtue of their nationality—as members of the political organization whose establishment is planned. He indicated that there will be no room for political symbols in the foundation of the new political action. "This will happen through the villages and districts or through regional conferences at the level of provinces and their subdivisions. There will be no political appointments or organization membership cards."

Al-Bashir broached the Sudanese opposition's stances, saying that the only effective opposition to his government is represented by the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] under Colonel John Garang. As for the scattered vestiges, they are mercenaries who have no influence inside the country. Any of them who wants to return can come. I declare that the general amnesty door is still open, but returnees will be subject to the law in force in the country in the event that they commit offenses that requiring them to be interrogation. He pointed out that anyone affected by security measures is entitled to know the reason for his arrest. The authorities have no right to torture him. He is also entitled to contact an attorney to defend him. And he is entitled to lodge a complaint with the National Security Council (headed by Lt. Gen. al-Bashir himself.)

Asked about the political prisoners who have been released but have been banned by the authorities from traveling, he just said: "There are certain security measures which security officials adopt on the basis of specific factors."

With regard to the truth of reports that the authorities have entered into a dialogue with former Sudanese Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, he said: "There is no dialogue in the usual sense of the word, but there is an understanding."

He commented on al-Mahdi's call to resolve the country's problems within a national and peaceful framework by emphasizing [sentence incomplete] With regard to how much "salvation" has been achieved by the regime—which celebrated the National Salvation Revolution's second anniversary at the end of June—Lt. Gen. al-Bashir said that "the Revolution Command Council's program aims to stop the decline inherited from the former parliamentary system. This does not mean that we will bring about a lowering of living standards, but it is unfair to promise people to change their living standards for the better, otherwise these would be false promises."

Al-Bashir explained to AL-HAYAH the roots of the southern Sudan problem, saying that Britain aimed to spread Christianity in Sudan after it colonized it in order to turn it into a "Christian state." He noted that the southern citizens are victims of the war which has been going on there for over eight years. "I am among those who have taken part in it and experienced its horrors." He emphasized that SPLM and regular Army fighters really want peace, but that there are "some people who are benefiting from the continuation of the war. Despite this, we believe that the atmosphere is now favorable for peace." He described the South's exemption from the Islamic criminal law for 1991 as "a major concession by

the government." He said: We announced the implementation of the federal system in order to grant southerners more powers, so how can we be described as inflexible? He stressed that the Sudanese Government will in no way agree to the South's secession.

Next, al-Bashir dealt with the military situation, especially since he now occupies the post of commander-in-chief of the Sudanese Army. He emphasized that his forces can now go wherever they want in the South; that they have reached Yei, Juba, Malakal, Uyil [as transliterated], Rumberk, and Yirol; and that they can reach Eastern Equatoria, a stronghold for Col. Garang's forces.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir denied that there exist a multiplicity of security organs in his country, describing as "foolish talk" the claims being made about the existence of an organ for "Sudan's security" and another for the "revolution's security."

Asked about the fate of former Sudanese President Ja'far Numayri he said: "We issued him a passport after we learned that he wanted to return to the country. We arranged a house for him and issued a decision granting him a pension as former commander-in-chief of the Army, just like retired Major General Khalid Hasan 'Abbas, former commander-in-chief in the Numayri era. But it seems that he does not want to return because of personal aspirations."

Asked why he does not grant Numayri the pension to which he is entitled, the Sudanese president replied: "Numayri is regarded by the law as a deserter from the military service, and on this basis his payments were stopped. If he really wants to return, there is nothing to prevent it from our side, because the amnesty decision includes him."

'Transportation Problem' Cited in Oil Supply

EA1307150091 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 12 Jul 91

[Text] Naval Colonel Salah al-Din Muhammad Ahmad Karrar, member of the Revolution Command Council [RCC], chairman of the Economic Committee, and minister for transportation and communications, said that the country has abundant and sufficient quantities of petroleum products, adding that the only thing holding up their arrival from the port was the transportation problem. He said the state has a plan based on local capacities to overcome all transportation difficulties. He said the problem would be solved gradually over the next six months.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Stops in Khartoum

EA1507143591 Khartoum SUNA in English 0930 GMT 15 Jul 91

[Text] Khartoum, 15 July—The Nigerian foreign minister yesterday evening stopped over at Khartoum Airport on [his] way to Djibouti for participation in the upcoming Somali reconciliatory conference. He will be representing the Nigerian President Babangida at the conference with his capacity as the OAU current chairman.

The Nigerian official was received at the airport by the information minister and acting foreign minister, 'Abdullah Muhammad Ahmad. The two ministers had an hour-long talk on the Somali crisis and Sudan's efforts to find a solution to the problem. Ahmad told SUNA that the Nigerian foreign minister expressed his country's readiness to cooperate with the Sudan for achieving a peaceful solution to the Somali problem.

Kuwait

KUNA Reports National Council Weekly Session

LD1607153691 London KUNA in Arabic 1326 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Kuwait, 16 Jul (KUNA)—The Kuwaiti National Council held its ordinary weekly session this morning, under the chairmanship of 'Abd-al-'Aziz al Misa'id, in order to complete the discussion of the agenda. The council approved an emergency proposal put forward by a member with regard to allocating 20,000 Kuwaiti dinars to every Kuwaiti family to enable them to repair the damage caused to their property by the Iraqi aggression; half the amount will be a donation, and the other half will be an interest-free loan.

The council referred a number of suggestions to its specialized committees, including one on reducing the percentage of acceptance of Kuwaitis at Kuwait University and another on setting up delegations of council members in order to visit the capitals of fraternal and friendly states which supported Kuwait in its ordeal, to express thanks and gratitude. The council also referred an emergency proposal of the government with regard to the protection by the Central Bank, in coordination with the national banks, of Kuwaiti citizens' financial rights regarding civil servants wishing to leave for good, by laying down a system to insure these rights.

The council approved the membership of Dr. Muhammad al-Haddad, Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Ahmad, Ibrahim Bursali, 'Abd-al-Aziz al-'As'usi, and Ahmad Bahbahani, to the committee of reply to the government program, which was formed by the council today.

The council agreed to the government request to postpone the discussion of two issues: The first concerns security measures taken by the government since liberation to protect internal and external security, and the second is about the plan of the government regarding the problem of Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons who are still in the jails of the Iraqi regime. The council discussed the report of the Election Supervisory Committee concerning a candidate in an electoral constituency.

The council suspended its session at about noon, and will hold its ordinary session next Tuesday. Later, the committee of reply to the government program held its first session.

Saudi Arabia

Support of Ban on Mass Destruction Weapons Noted

LD1607202291 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] A responsible source has made the following statement to SPA: Based on the firm policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which supports the spreading of peace all over the world, for mankind to enjoy peace and its positive effects on the welfare of mankind and on its social and economic development, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always supported and continues to support and back any effort to limit the spread of destructive weapons worldwide and in any region of the world. It has always supported and continues to support and back the creation of regions free from these weapons in any part of the globe.

In application of this constructive policy, which stems from its love of peace, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has joined the treaty banning the proliferation of nuclear weapons and abided by its provisions. It has also supported at various international gatherings the work to limit chemical and bacteriological weapons. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia deeply believes that the Middle East region, which has suffered many wars and has sunk under the burden of the production and importation of the various weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological —is one of the regions of the world in most dire need of being freed of such destructive weapons and of solving its problems by peaceful means, away from wars and destruction.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in line with its policy of supporting peace in any part of the world, wants to express its sincere desire and full readiness to abide by any ban imposed on weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East—once this ban includes "all the states of the region equally—whether at the level of production or importation or at the level of the balance of the military capabilities with regard to quantity and quality

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also declares its readiness, should the elements of the implementation of such a ban apply to any of the weapons in its possession, to lead the states of the region in getting rid of such banned weapons. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is ready to make a positive and constructive contribution to any search for drawing up an international framework for a system of ban in the region, its principles, and the regulations for its implementation. Proceeding from its serious desire for peace to prevail in the Middle East region and its untiring work for this, a matter which creates trust among the states of the region and leads to the removal of the weapons of mass destruction and the causes of the arms race in the region, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia affirms anew its support in this context for the initiative of His Excellency U.S. President George Bush aimed at banning the proliferation of mass destruction weapons in the Middle East region, calls on all the states of the region to make a serious response to this noble objective, and asks all the states in the world to urge the states of the region to achieve this objective.

By declaring its support for the U.S. initiative and every initiative that aims at the achievement of this desire, while expressing its sincere desire and full readiness to abide by such a ban, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia looks forward to the time when the Kingdom will be able to implement it with all the states of the region, so that peace, security, stability and prosperity may prevail in the Middle East region, in the interest of its peoples and the interest of all mankind.

Saddam Gives Revolution Anniversary Speech

JN1707072491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0705 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Jul (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has stated that the treacherous 30-country aggression against Iraq on 17 January 1991 was a battle which in terms of reality and results was one between good and faith on one side and evil and aggression on the other.

In an important historic speech to the Iraqi people, the Arab nation, and the world at large on the 23d glorious 17-30 July revolution anniversary over the Iraqi national radio and television network this morning, President Saddam Husayn said that good clung to its position while evil became exposed when it emerged from its hiding place without anything to cover its shame.

President Saddam Husayn said that the rancorous aggressors destroyed what Iraqis had built over 23 years of effort, sacrifice, and hard labor. Thanks be to God, much good remains in the hearts, on the land, and within it.

Addressing the people of Iraq, his excellency said: With its spiritual and moral values, all its implications, and its material, cultural, and civilized details, and with help from God and through your participation and creative determination—you who have made a civilization of 6,000 years—the new structure will be higher, stronger, and more capable of achieving your well-being as a true reward for your sacrifice and right to life.

The president added: God willing, this structure will be the model for the sons of the nation, and an example of determination in work and construction for wronged and tormented humanity.

President Saddam Husayn said: Tangible evidence has shown, not only during the direct military aggression by the 30 states but also after the cease-fire that they had not only aimed against Iraq's policy to implement measures concerning its alleged contravention of international law but also against the people and Armed Forces with the same strength and on the same level. It has also shown that this was not designed only for the present, but also for the future.

His excellency said that the aggression's operations and military actions were not only meant to paralyze the opposing military action in combat conditions but also to destroy in order to block the future paths for Iraq and its mujahid people.

In his historic speech, the president added: Aggression did not distinguish between young and old, between a youth and an old man, between men and women, between military personnel and civilians, and between soldiers in Kuwait and in Zakho. So the al-'Amiriyah shelter, which was used to protect civilians—including women, children, and the aged— was a target of their aggressiveness and aggression just like the shelters and trenches on the line of faith and confrontation on the military front were a target of that aggression.

His excellency explained: The aggression did not distinguish between a baby formula factory and the brave strugglers' trenches, between a bridge for passersby or a hospital and the arms factories. Their aggression on Iraq and its Armed Forces continued after the cease-fire declaration and the economic blockade has also continued until now, although they linked the blockade with circumstances and situations that no longer exist.

The president added: All the aggressors, big or small, have lied to the world and their people as well as to one another. For they linked economic siege and withdrawal from Kuwait and they have insisted on continuing the siege, which is still there, until the present day. At every stage they fabricate all sorts of things in order to delay lifting the siege imposed on Iraq.

His excellency said: Iraq has paid the price of the accumulation of the nation's centuries of weakness and the price of the weakness of those in our nation who assumed power in some of the countries of the nation.

The president said: At a time when Iraq has paid the price of the weakness of all weak ones in our nation, it has also paid the dowry of capability and rennaissance in the nation and won the honorable crown of jihad, faith, patience, sacrifice, and glory.

His excellency said: To be a sound battle, the nation's battle, as has always been the case, should begin within hearts so that it may entrench faith or create it if it does not exist in the first place. Next, the battle should be within the nation to entrench all that is pure, sincere, confident, faithful, and capable, to distinguish it from all that is treacherous, shaky, weak, and lacking in faith and capability.

President Saddam Husayn declared that the experience of 23 years of construction, sacrifice, fighting, patience, efforts, and achievements, and the experience of the faithful throughout history, particularly the experience of the Islamic message and its great Prophet Muhammad, may Gods's peace and blessings be upon him, indisputably confirm that we are capable, with God's help, of repulsing the aggression, defeating evil and evildoers, and pursuing construction.

His excellency added: No one will be able to harm this right, which has been proved by the facts and experience of 6,000 years of cultural buildup in Mesopotamia.

The president explained: Since the aggression stopped, we have worked day and night to remove what we could of the aftermath of the aggression although the blockade against our country continued, and although threats, plotting, and fabrications did not cease.

He said: What the children of Iraq, men and women, have achieved over these few months in rebuilding and restoring services has amazed friends and foes alike. It

gives conclusive evidence about these people's vitality and high ability to build and make the future.

President Saddam Husayn pointed out that during this period, the leadership has continued the program which it had been planning for years and about which he spoke on 16 March.

His excellency said: We are going ahead, God willing, to bring back security, stability, and reassurance to the northern part of our beloved homeland. Work is continuing among the sincere Iraqis—Arabs and Kurds—to strengthen and develop the autonomy experiment for our Kurdish people and put life in the autonomous region into its correct framework, realizing security, stability, and prosperity for this region's children and for all the children of Iraq.

The leader president added: The party law, which was referred to the National Assembly, has been approved by the assembly and is now taking its legislative course in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Thus, we will shortly enter the phase of implementation of the principles of party pluralism through a wide door, since it is a basic pillar of the new phase.

In his historic speech, President Saddam called on all Iraqi nationalists of different intellectual and political leanings who are concerned about Iraq's independence, unity, dignity, strength, and safety, and who have a sense of true national responsibility, to turn over the leaf of disputes and clashes that has existed in the past, as the objective circumstances for these no longer exist.

His excellency also called on the Iraqis to participate in the new experience in a responsible, conscious, and active manner based on sincere intentions to serve Iraq and the nation's interests so that everyone can work jointly in order to protect Iraq from threat and treachery and to continue to build great and prosperous Iraq within the framework of democracy and national unity and under the banner of noble principles and national and pan-Arab goals.

The text of President Saddam Husayn's speech follows:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. O great Iraqi people; I repeat, O great people. O struggling men in our valiant Armed Forces; I repeat, valiant, struggling men, who have strong arms and firm belief in the duel and in the principles of faith and honor as demonstrated in "al-Qadisiyah" and "the Mother of Battles" from the very first day until the time and the extent that may suit the faith and ability of every believer. O faithful and honest masses of our glorious Arab nation.

O honorable men wherever you are. There have been 23 years between the present moment and the first faithful and brave step on the path of the revolution staged by honest believers between 17 and 30 July 1968.

As of today we, with God's blessings, start a new year, the 24th year of the revolution and its long, victorious march and achievements on the path of principles.

The generation that experienced the revolution and the generations that joined its march suffered many sacrifices which can only be compensated by God's blessings on the strugglers of this revolution who championed its principles wholeheartedly. This also is rewarded by the glory and loftiness that can be recorded at present and in the future, and by what the righteous people can compensate with through lofty construction and fruitful and constant action.

The July revolution generation and the generations that accompanied its glorious march have realized that nations who want to live with God's blessings do not do so on the basis of what takes place in days or on what is materially available. They realized that the result of what is based on the present sacrifices is not only larger than all of Iraq but also the entire nation and may exceed it in certain aspects and be recorded in the annals of the gains achieved by all mankind.

While rallying around the march of their revolution, which molded their new character and sublime status, the Iraqis realized that in a divided nation the burden of struggle and jihad is often borne by part of the nation under certain circumstances and at a particular moment of confrontation, and not by the whole nation. Therefore, the share of sacrifice cannot be distributed equally, at least at the beginning, to all the children of the nation. The burden of the Islamic call was borne at the beginning by Muhammad Bin-'Abdallah, the great messenger, God's peace be upon him, and then by him and a small number of his righteous followers, may God bless them, and finally by Quraysh [name of an Arab tribe in ancient Mecca] to a greater extent than other tribes in the divided Arabian Peninsula with its dispersed people who were divided over the message. Then a special burden fell on the Hashemites of Quraysh. The burden on those who emigrated with the prophet also differed from that of those who later supported him and their status matched the burden in this world and the hereafter.

Afterward, the countries near the Peninsula bore the burden, each according to its role and the phase during which it joined Islam. Baghdad took the burden, carrying the banner of the nation under the shadow of the Abbasid state when the bonds of Arab and Islamic unity weakened. In the modern age, the burden was borne by Egypt during the rule of the late 'Abd-al-Nasir, may God have him in his mercy. Today, Iraq is taking the burden, although this burden has different weight and characteristics.

On the basis of what we have invoked of these meanings, of the principles of the great Ba'th Party—which believed in the people and the nation—of the Ba'th Party's firm ideology and slogans, and of what God Almighty willed, brave and gallant people have worked diligently and made a great deal of sacrifices to turn poor and backward Iraq, which had moved several centuries

away from its leading role in civilization and from the might and glory it used to enjoy, into a new Iraq invoking in the present circumstances the spirit and glory of the past and developing in the present situation into a better and higher state.

The edifice rose step by step and the spirit of self-confidence and the trust in national resources deepened. Monuments of progress rose in every walk of life—in culture, industry, agriculture, art, literature, and services. The people's standard of living rose to new heights. People in Iraq who suffered frustration and disunity acquired a single conviction and walked in the same general direction. The confidence in the present and the optimism about the future grew and deepened and the Iraqis forgot the saying: "Iraqis are good for nothing."

During the period of construction and during the period of defending this construction in the glorious second al-Qadisiyah battle, the Iraqis emerged as a solid paragon to be emulated by the Arab nation, strengthening the nation's hope and self-confidence.

As the edifice grew and the requirements of glory and of defending these achievements developed, some parties were lying in wait for this sincere and responsible national and pan-Arab experiment. They lay in wait in three positions. Zionism was at the forefront of those who lay in wait for everything that was positive and for anything novel they had not experienced given the adverse conditions of the Arab regimes. The Zionists dreaded the Arab nation's awakening which would inevitably put an end to their expansionist, aggressive designs to build the state of Israel from the Euphrates to the River Nile based on myths, fake claims and groundless, illegitimate ambitions at the expense of the Arab nation's right to its land, wealth and character and of the destiny it aspires to. This dream goes with the growing Iraqi might and with the consolidation of the new Iraqi character and the unified traits that could weather storms and crises. This is because Israel's strength lies in the weakness of the Arabs and in their disunity in words, stands, and actions in relation to Israel's expansionist ambitions.

Israel saw in this paragon standing erect in the land of Mesopotamia as something that could threaten its designs and make them regress and as something that would revive the Arabs' hopes of regaining their legitimate rights in Palestine—the cradle of Christ, may God's peace be upon him, and the native place of the Dome of the Rock and the place from where the great Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, ascended to Heaven—and enable our beloved Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate right like all other people in this world to a life that satisfies God, the people, and the nation. There were also those who were counted as Arabs and who, motivated by weakness, envy, injustice, treachery, and treason, saw that what was being built in Iraq and the principled and honest stances stemming from a sense of responsibility and sacrifice for the sake of principles that Iraq espouses, was esposing their selfishness, impotence, and shameful behavior conflicting with the nation's values and the tribulation of tens of millions of its children.

On the farthest side, our experiment was being monitored by the advocates of colonialist policies in the past and those who champion imperialist policies at present and who, in view of the interrelated fate, sentiments, objectives and interests, and heritage that bind the Arab nation, found in Iraq's resurgence something that would not be confined solely to a specific country but that would inevitably become the incentive for pan-Arab resurgence. In this, their analysis was in agreement and they participated in the conspiracies with all those who were lying in wait in the two earlier trenches because this resurgence threatened their illegal interests, not based on the mutal exchange of interests, on what is fair, and on what is common among men, but on the basis of repression, the weakening and humiliation of people, selfishness, and exploitation.

The onslaught took place in two successive stages. They all fired their arrows as traitors and collaborators, or as direct participants, each according to the opportunities that were available.

Iran perpetrated the aggression against us in 1980 under false pretexts and slogans. When in August 1988 our great people and valiant Armed Forces emerged from that long, bloody battle strong, secure, and proud, the enemies found that the aspirations of Iraq, the message, and its challenge of the present required a different type of buildup and a shameless alignment to turn the three trenches—whose system is based on the theory of equal exchange in duty, power, and support—into the wicked trench combining in the brutal, inhuman, and vicious forces assembling on both sides of the aggressive expansion, with Iran being in the front, in addition to Zionism, and to servants in the service of its interests. They used all the assets they had built in souls full of hatred and in wills under their domination. These souls and wills were breathlessly running toward the currency basket offered at the international auction in return for abandoning honor, virtue, and legitimacy.

The treacherous 30-country aggression against Iraq on 17 January 1991 was a battle which in terms of reality and results was one between good and faith on one side and evil and aggression on the other. Good clung to its position in the Mother of Battles, while evil became exposed when it emerged from its hiding place without anything to cover its shame. The villains thought that by abandoning balanced distinctions, they could destroy manhood by destroying childhood, that they could close the doors to the future by destroying the foundations of the material construction of the present, that they could remove faith from hearts by stripping markets of goods, and that they could terminate principles by dividing ranks. But they have been disappointed, and their disappointment will grow stronger with the days, God

willing. Strong God will only support right; He is against wrong and His will is unpreventable.

O glorious Iraqis, the vile aggressors destroyed what we built over the past 23 years with our effort, sweat, and sacrifice. However, God be praised, much good remains in the hearts and everywhere on earth. Through the resolution of the zealous, we will build the edifice that will satisfy God. It will be a lofty one that will fill every corner of beloved Iraq with prosperity and the vigor of progress.

The new edifice will be established on high spiritual and moral values in addition to its material, educational, and cultural details. With God's help and through your creative participation and effort, you, the makers of the 6,000-year-old civilization, the edifice will be more advanced and more capable of pleasing you as a reward for your sacrifices and your right to life.

This new edifice will be, God willing, an example to be followed by the children of the nation and by a humanity that is miserable and aggrieved because of its faithful determination to carry out constructive work. God is great.

All we have said about the states of aggression and the crime they committed, and about the evildoers, the veterans, and the brokers of aggression and aggressors, including the despots and their humiliated slaves, is now true just as it was when we said it. It applies completely to these aggressors and traitors. There is no need to repeat it, although it is a duty to repeat some of what we said when the situation so requires, especially since they said what they said about us. The rest of what they said about us came in the events that followed. All their words were tested in a large scale manner with the free and sincere will of the citizens in Baghdad, the Arab, and the world, the lovers of peace, right, justice, unity, and right.

Before that time they said their aggression did not target Iraq, that their military operations were only meant to get the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait, and that in doing so, they were not motivated by grudges or rancor. They said their operations had no other goals and that they were only targeting the leadership's policy toward Kuwait. They also said they would not leave a single soldier on Arab territory after returning Kuwait to its pre-2 August 1990 status. Where is their credibility in all this?

Tangible evidence has shown, not only during the direct military aggression by the 30 states but also after the cease-fire, that they had not only targeted Iraq's policy for its so-called contravention of international law but also targeted the people and Armed Forces with the same strength and on the same level. It has also shown that this was not designed only for the present but also for the future. Aggression and military actions were not only meant to paralyze the opposing military action in combat circumstances but also to destroy in order to block the future paths for Iraq and its mujahid people.

Accordingly, aggression did not distinguish between young and old, between a youth and an old man, between a man and a woman, between military personnel and civilians, or between a soldier in Kuwait and another in Zakho. So the al-'Amiriyah shelter, which was used to protect civilians, including women, children, and the elderly, was a target of their aggressiveness and aggression just as the shelters and trenches on the line of faith and confrontation on the military front were a target of that aggression. The aggressors did not distinguish between a baby formula factory and the brave strugglers' trenches, between a bridge for passersby or a hospital and arms factories. Their aggression on Iraq and its Armed Forces continued after the cease-fire declaration and the economic blockade has also continued until now, although they linked the blockade with circumstances and situations that no longer exist.

Despite the fact that Kuwait has returned to the status they wanted, the siege has continued. Thus, they are reminding the Iraqis and all the noble people that the aggression was aimed against the Iraqi people and strength, both at present and in the future, from the north to the south and from the east to the west. The chapter of treason and treachery, which they prepared in cooperation with Iran, is part of this plan which completes the picture in every detail.

All the aggressors, big and small, have all lied to the world and their people as well as to one another. For they linked economic siege to withdrawal from Kuwait despite the fact that we reminded our people and nation that the beginning of this siege began in early 1990. They have insisted on continuing the siege to this day. At every stage, they fabricated all sorts of things in order to delay lifting the siege imposed on Iraq.

After collecting the monies they had promised to collect from the contributors who were willing to subject their nations's wealth and the wealth of their rich people, they began clamoring to collect more monies from Iraq under many banners, themes, pretexts. They pledged that they would withdraw their forces the moment the Iraqi Army left Kuwait, but their forces are still in the region. They now also assert that part of these forces will remain not only in the waters of the Arabs and the region but on Arab land and in some countries of the region as well. Thus, new elements were added to the dire motives of the aggression against Iraq, warning those who need warning. The aggressors exposed the real nature of their satellites and lackeys and opened the arena for everyone to see all the contradictions.

Iraq has paid the price of the accumulation of centuries of weakness in the Arab nation and the price of the weakness of some of those in our nation who assumed power in some of its countries.

The strong in terms of principles, commitment, and ethics will continue to pay the price of the weakness of the weak who cause division until the time when God permits the nation to achieve a cohesive unity in which

there will be no place for weakness and where it will be replaced by factors of resurgence and capability. While Iraq has paid the price of the weakness of all the weak ones in our Arab nation, it has also paid the dowry of capability and renaissance in the nation and won the honorable crown of jihad, faith, patience, sacrifice, and glory.

Iraq has paid the price of the state of fragementation that our nation experiences and, at the same time, it has paid the dowry for the beginning of its unity, which is based on a deep sense of common fate, and the sound aspiration to that which can save it so that it may stand on the threshold of a future full of dignity, optimism, capability, and prosperity.

Iraq has paid the price for the backwardness of the nation, of some of the Arab nation's children wasting the opportunity, or not wresting it in accordance with the great civilized and spiritual role that history has laid out for it. At the same time, Iraq has paid the dowry for the beginning of this renaissance and for the realization that has started to emerge among the children of the nation that unity is possible in accordance with sound bases or conditions.

This and all the other things that the nation lacks have become a burden on part of this nation, which is Iraq, and a heavy commitment that it has to fulfill. At the same time, I say that this and other things have outlined the conditions of a sound beginning and the conditions and specifications of the sound model for construction and action. They have highlighted as well the need to make available the components for defending our freedom of choice, construction, and faithful action.

The battle also exposed all the open hostile enemies moved to bring all their exposed and concealed reserves into the battle.

Those believed in vain that Iraq would clear the way for the renegades after it lost all factors of capability and power, including the capability of option and decision based on the faith that is in the hearts. So they unveiled their ugly faces. When the enemies and their puppets fail to mix the cards, the colors, and the trenches, the battlefield between the two trenches will provide new opportunities for the children of the Arab nation to strike from now on those who should be struck, not those who are on the right side or the left side of the target or those who provide a cover for the principal traitors and treacherous ones.

As in the past, the nation's battle, if it is to be a sound one, should begin within the self to strengthen or deepen faith and create a new self if it does not exist at all. Then the battle should be within the nation to distinguish the pure, honest, faithful, and capable people from the desecrated, treacherous, weak, and unfaithful people.

Only this we believe should be said on this occasion out of the unshakable faith in God and His capability for granting victory to the faithful and rewarding the righteous martyrs and the honest mujahidin.

O glorious Iraqis, O faithful believers in our valiant Armed Forces, the experience of 23 years of construction, sacrifice, fighting, patience, effort, and accomplishment, and the experience of the faithful throughout history as well as the experience of the Islamic mission and its great Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and blessings be upon him, show beyond doubt or hesitation that we are capable, with God's help, of repulsing harm and aggression, driving away evil and the evildoers, and pursuing construction. You, by God, are a people that deserves life, good, and glory. No one will be able to undermine this right, which has been confirmed by the facts and experience of 6,000 years of cultural buildup in Mesopotamia.

Brethren, since the cessation of aggression a few months ago, we have worked day and night to remove all that we can of the traces of aggression although the blockade against our country continues, and although threats, plotting, and fabrications have not ceased. What the people of Iraq, men and women, have achieved over these few months in the sphere of rebuilding and restoring services has amazed friends and foes alike. This is a conclusive evidence of this people's vitality and high ability to build and make the future.

During this period, too, the leadership continued the program it had been planning for years and about which we spoke on 16 March. We are going ahead, with God's help, to bring back security, stability, and reassurance to the northern part of our beloved homeland. Work is continuing among the sincere Iraqis—Arabs and Kurds—to strengthen and develop the submissive experiment on our Kurdish people, and put it in the framework within the overall framework of a united Iraq. This will ensure security, stability, and prosperity for the people of this region as well as all the people of great Iraq.

The political party law, which was referred to the National Assembly, has been approved by the assembly and is now taking its legislative course in accordance with the Constitution. Thus, we will soon enter the phase of implementation of the principles of party pluralism through a wider door. This is a main foundation in the new phase. I call on all nationalist Iraqis from every political and intellectual persuasion—those who are eager for Iraq's independence, unity, dignity, strength, and safety, and who have a sense of true national responsibility—to turn over the page of disputes and clashes that existed in the past, as the objective circumstances for these no longer exist. I call on them to participate actively, responsibly, and knowledgeably in the new experience, and in good faith, to serve Iraq and the interests of the nation. All should work on the common ground of protecting Iraq from threats and treachery, and all should join forces to continue building great, rising, and prosperous Iraq within the framework

of democracy and national unity and under the banner of the sublime national and pan-Arab principles and goals.

As I have always been, I am confident that our great, brave people can overcome the difficulties and ordeals and open the way to the future.

May God salute Iraq and its zealous, honest, and faithful sons. May God give dwelling to our martyrs in His immortal paradise. May God salute the faithful men in our valiant Armed Forces. May God salute the Arab nation and its zealous children who enjoy sincere belief and strong action. May God salute the mujahid stone-throwing people in dear Palestine. God is great, and accursed be the lowly.

Minister Denies U.S. Envoy's Remark on Imports

JN1607203891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1908 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 16 Jul (INA)—Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih has denied a statement by the U.S. delegate to the United Nations in Geneva that between late March and early July 1991 Iraq imported 1.1 million metric tons of foodstuffs. He described the U.S. official's statement as unfounded.

Addressing a news conference this evening, which was attended by Arab and foreign press, news agency, and television correspondents as well as INA correspondents, he said that the economic sanctions committee is aware of what Iraq has received, contrary to what was noted by the U.S. delegate in Geneva. He said very few materials have been received, indicating that they were sent by [illegible] organizations.

He added that Iraq welcomed Red Cross representatives [illegible] the food supplies distributed by the U.S. forces to the Kurds are unfit for human consumption and are being offered for propaganda purposes to achieve malicious political ends.

Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih indicated that the statement of the U.S. delegate in Geneva is part of an organized campaign aimed at maintaining the blockade imposed on Iraq after Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan presented a report to the United Nations affirming that Iraq needs food and medicine. The minister said this is part of the U.S. attempt to obstruct any current international efforts to lift the unjust blockade imposed on the people of Iraq.

He referred to the grave consequences suffered by the Iraqi people as a result of the continued blockade. He said this measure resulted in the death of 11,000 persons, mostly children, and could lead to the death of 170,000 children if the blockade continues until end of this year.

Concluding his news conference, the minister urged the living international conscience and all humanitarian organizations to work to lift the unjust blockade on the Iraqi people.

State Minister, Arab Diplomats on U.S. 'Threats'

JN1707105591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0950 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Jul (INA)—Mr. Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf, minister of state for foreign affairs, received heads of Arab diplomatic missions in Baghdad last night. He explained Iraq's full cooperation to facilitate the task of the UN inspection teams in pursuance of Security Council Resolution 687. He also referred to the messages Iraq sent to the Security Council and the UN secretary general explaining its peaceful nuclear capabilities. The minister exposed the motives of the American-Western-Zionist campaign against Iraq's nuclear program and the double standard used when dealing with Israel's military nuclear program.

Mr. al-Sahhaf explained the motives behind Iraq's call for an extraordinary and emergency meeting of the Arab foreign ministers to discuss the U.S. threats of aggression against Iraq, and the need for the Arab states to support this call. He said Iraq has invited the Arab League to set up a commission representing the league, or one from Egypt, to get acquainted with the facts in Iraq so that the Arabs can shoulder their pan-Arab responsibilities in confronting the American allegations.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, head of the Arab Department at the Foreign Ministry

Arab League Invited To Inspect Nuclear Sites

JN1607170191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1626 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (INA)—Iraq has proposed that the Arab League set up an Arab committee to visit Iraqi nuclear installations. This was declared by Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent delegate to the Arab league, following his meeting today with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid. In a press statement, Najm said that he handed a message from Foreign Minister Ahmad Husayn to 'Abd-al-Majid that included that proposal. Iraq offered to acquaint the committee with the nature of the operations and tasks of the nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes and with the facilities to which Iraq is providing the international inspection team access.

UN Team Inspects al-Tarmiyah

JN1707045691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2055 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 16 Jul (INA)—The international team inspecting nuclear facilities has acquainted itself with the installations of the al-Tarmiyah nuclear facility. A responsible source at the Foreign Ministry told INA that the team visited the facility on 16 July and held a detailed and expanded scientific dialogue with the deputy head of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Organization, technicians, researchers, and operators.

The source added that the team also examined the first operating records of the eight separators [al-fasilat] installed there and took some of the papers from the operating computer. It also watched a videotape of the effects of the air raids on the facility.

Saddam's Daughter Said Hurt in Nightclub Attack

NC1707104891 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 0445 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] [Words indistinct] in the capital Baghdad and as a crowning act in their plan to attack Saddam's centers of corruption, our heroic revolutionaries of the popular forces operating in Baghdad carried out a bold attack on an exclusive nightclub designated for Saddam's contemptible henchmen and their dissolute families. At 1100 on 1 July, the heroic mujahidin attacked a nightclub in al-Sa'dun Street near al-Nasr Square [words indistinct], where the wife of the servile Kamil Husayn, Saddam's defense minister, who is also the daughter of despicable Saddam, and the wife of the buried minister 'Adnan Khayrallah were present. Several criminals were killed or wounded in the heroic attack, and it has been learned that the servile Kamil Husayn's wife was among the injured [words indistinct]. Eyewitnesses reported that a fire broke out in the nightclub [words indistinct].

Al-Sa'dun Street was closed immediately after the operation, and units of the regime's intelligence service and repressive forces were seen moving toward [words indistinct] and near vital centers. The valiant revolutionaries withdrew safely to their base amid a state of general panic.

Congratulations to you on this heroic, daring act, O supporters of al-Husayn, God's blessings be on him.

5 Jul Rebel Attack on Ba'th Party Office Reported

NC1707093591 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 0445 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] In continuation of the daily acts of jihad carried out by al-Basrah's popular revolutionary forces against the on Saddam's support base, his henchmen, and executioners, our popular forces in al-Basrah area attacked one of the iniquitous Ba'th gang's centers on 5 July. Our source added that a group of our heroic popular forces killed a group of the Ba'thist gang's servile and criminal leaders during a heroic attack on the infidel Ba'th Party's headquarters in al-Basrah's Talhah district. 'Abd-al-Qadir Muhammad, the party's police secretary, was the most prominent official among those killed and [words indistinct].

Memo to UN Reports More U.S. Air 'Violations'

JN1707062091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2052 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] New York, 16 Jul (INA)—Iraq has informed the United Nations that U.S. aircraft continue to violate Iraqi airspace for purposes of reconnaissance and provocation. Iraq's permanent UN representative said in a memorandum presented to the UN secretary general that on 14-15 July U.S. aircraft carried out 23 sorties in 11 formations each consisting of two planes and one single-plane sortie. The planes flew at a speed of 600-720 km per hour and at low and medium altitudes. The memorandum said the hostile activity concentrated over Irbil, Mosul, and Dahuk.

Rebel Radio on Talabani-Barzani Dispute

NC1607163291 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1500 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Kurdish sources have emphasized that the dispute between Jalal Talabani and Mas'ud Barzani on the negotiations between Kurdish groups and the defeated tyrant's regime on autonomous Kurdish rule is growing. The sources said that Barzani met with defeated tyrant Saddam Husayn after Talabani left Baghdad.

There are reportedly no indications that an agreement will be worked out concerning the points of dispute with the dictator's regime. The tyrant's separate meetings with the Kurdish leaders and Talabani's sudden departure reflect a major dispute between the two, the sources added.

Sources in Baghdad have reported that the defeated tyrant might respond to [word indistinct] and will endorse the crucial demands of the Kurdish negotiators, particularly those concerning the delineation of the autonomous region.

Final Statement on Kurdish Political Meetings

JN1607134491 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1645 GMT 15 Jul 91

[Final statement on the meetings of the political leadership of the Kurdistan Front, issued 8 July 1991—read by announcer]

[Text] The political leadership of the Kurdistan Front held a series of meetings in late June and mid-July 1991, to assess the current situation in Kurdistan, the current dialogue and negotiations between the front and the government, the international situation, and its positive response to events in Kurdistan in particular and in Iraq in general—events which have affected the overall situation in our country and in the region.

The meetings, which began with a moment of silence to honor the martyrs of Kurdistan and the Iraqi national movement, were characterized by an atmosphere of confidence and agreement. The conferees discussed all issues in a brotherly, militant, and objective spirit to serve our people's interests, unity of ranks, and their just goals.

The meetings proudly evaluated the events that faced Kurdistan after the Gulf war, especially the historic uprising that epitomized the creative, strong unity of our

people and the courage of their sons, foremost of which are the heroic Peshmerga and all other armed people who insisted on standing by their people. This led to the liberation of areas of Iraq's Kurdistan in record time.

Our people's unity, their brave uprising, and the ensuing unprecedented, tragic mass emigration of the sons of our people from major cities, which were restored by the authority's forces after violent air raids, shelling, and the use of all types of weapons, resulted in the martyrdom of scores of thousands of our people's sons and daughters and were tantamount to a referendum that showed our people's rejection of the authority's policy and their readiness to bear all burdens and sacrifices in defense of their existence and their rights.

Yes, these serious developments and the reports by scores of representatives from international news agencies, newspapers, and audio visual and print media that transmitted the details of the tragedy to the world have led to an explosion in world public opinion over these inhuman practices against our people and to unprecedented support for their struggle. Voices were also raised throughout the world and by governments in support of our people's cause and in condemnation of the repressive policies against them.

This widespread interest was crowned by the fact that our people's voice was heard, for the first time, by the UN Security Council. Resolutions 688 was issued on 6 April 1991 and supports our struggle in particular and Iraq's struggle in general and calls for ending the massacres of the sons of Kurdistan. Other important resolutions were also made by the European summit conferences to defend the Kurdish people as well as scores of other resolutions on various international levels.

The results of the Gulf war and the growing international interest in our cause as well as the effect of the international situation on our country and its fate have led to a clear change in the balance of power and to reviewing many facts pertaining to our people's cause and its uniqueness, to our situation in Iraq, to the events to which our country was exposed, and to the experience of our people's liberation movement. They also have formed a suitable base for beginning dialogue and negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish cause.

Stemming from its persistent adherence to this slogan, the Kurdistan Front has responded and seriously participated in the dialogue with the aim of reaching the aspired results that serve the interest of the Iraqi people and our national cause and lead to entrenchment of democracy in the country. Several rounds of negotiations were held on the basis of the 11 March 1970 agreement with a view to developing it in a manner that takes developments and our people's great sacrifices into consideration. Much progress has been made during the negotiations which are continuing in order to complete the discussion of all other necessary aspects before a full agreement can be reached.

The front's political leadership appreciated the efforts made in this respect and carefully reviewed the progress of dialogue and the results so far. The conferees studied the proposals and remarks the delegation presented to the Iraqi Government, made the necessary remarks, and introduced the necessary changes into the proposed drafts, the autonomy law, the borders of the autonomous region, and the democracy question. They did so with a fraternal spirit and a desire to maintain the peace process and bring it to a successful conclusion through continued negotiations and the aim of enhancing agreement within the framework of the basic principles and demands. This will serve the Iraqi people's cause and national unity, consolidate brotherhood among Arabs, Kurds, and ethnic minorities through a radical and democratic solution to the Kurdish issue, and pave the way for democracy in Iraq by respecting human rights, endorsing political pluralism, ensuring freedom of the press and expression, and seriously working to resolve the people's political, economic, and social problems that resulted from wars and the overall extraordinary circumstances through which the country has passed.

The conferees positively praised the great international understanding of our cause and profoundly appreciated and thanked all those who contributed to this large-scale campaign launched by organizations, parties, governments, mass media, and personalities in support of and solidarity with our people in this ordeal. The meetings emphasized the need to continue efforts on the international level to ensure further understanding and support for our people and for any agreement concluded between us and the Iraqi Government, secure participation in rebuilding what was destroyed in Kurdistan, and resolve the human and social tragedy of hundreds of thousands of homeless and evacuees of the sons of our people inside and outside Kurdistan. The conferees also discussed the various aspects of the situation in Kurdistan.

In view of closing ranks in the front and that its political and armed forces are in urgent need to confront various challenges, the political leadership adopted a series of decisions aimed at organizing and consolidating the internal situation, unifying the peshmerga forces and the other establishments of the front, developing the front's action to further enable it to lead the Kurdish liberation movement in Iraqi Kurdistan, and resolving the masses' problems in the best possible way.

The meetings were concluded by voicing determination to seriously and relentlessly implement the adopted resolutions in a spirit of national responsibility.

Glory and immortality to the righteous martyrs of our people. Let all join hands in setting up the foundations of peace, brotherhood, security, and stability in our homeland. Long live the Iraqi Kurdistan Front.

[Signed] The political leadership of the Iraqi Kurdistan Front, 8 July 1991

SAIRI Leader Says 'Holy War' Must Continue

LD1707022291 Tehran IRNA in English 1618 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, July 16 (IRNA)—The only way the Iraqi people could get rid of the despotic ruling regime is to continue their jihad (holy war), Hojjat ol-eslam Mohammad Baqer Hakim, head of the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolutionary of Iraq (SAIRI) said here Tuesday.

In a message released here, Hakim accused the Baghdad regime of sowing discord among the Iraqi people and of trying to make friends with global arrogance.

"The Iraqi regime, now at the end of its tether, is resorting to all wicked methods to survive," the SAIRI leader pointed out. He called on the Iraqi people to differentiate between the Army and the corrupt, criminal elements ruling it. "The Iraqi masses should understand that the Army is part of the nation and we have no enmity with it."

1,200 Arabs Deported From Kuwait to Iraq

JN1607171291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1635 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Baghdad, 16 Jul (INA)—Today 390 Arab citizens deported by the Kuwaiti authorities arrived in Safwan in al-Basrah Governorate. This brings the number of deportees over the past 24 hours to more than 1,200 people.

The deportees disclosed to an INA correspondent in al-Basrah that the Kuwaiti authorities practiced all forms of torture and terrorism against Arab nationals. They said the authorities confiscated their money and used non-Arabs to replace Arab workers in civil service jobs.

Shamir on Possible Delay in Response to Syrians

TA1607191791 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Excerpt] The Likud Knesset faction, which met this afternoon, failed to decide whether to support or oppose the bill for the direct election of prime ministers. Defense Minister Moshe Arens expressed the most strident objection to the bill, saying that if it is endorsed, the prime minister's identity is liable to be determined by several radical, even subversive groups, from the Arab community. Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu supported the bill, while Knesset Member [MK] Hayim Corfu charged MK Uri'el Linn, in whose committee the bill had been prepared, with incompetence in readying the measure. Our Knesset affairs correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir reports from the Likud faction meeting:

[Begin recording] [Ahime'ir] The Israeli and foreign media representatives' great expectations of the prime minister's initial reaction to the Syrian response were dashed. What Mr. Shamir said was that he does not know everything.

[Shamir] There are political issues which we cannot address at this time since we do not have all the necessary, important information that will allow us to determine our stand. We may very well have to discuss these political issues during the summer recess.

[Ahime'ir] In the meantime, the Likud is stalling its decision on the electoral reform issue, an attitude implying opposition. One of the causes is the weight of the Arab vote. [passage omitted] [end recording]

'Secret' U.S. Pledges to Syria Causing Concern

TA1707104191 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 17 Jul 91 p A3

[Report by Avino'am Bar-Yosef]

[Excerpts] Israel holds a grave view of the U.S. intention to keep secret the contents of Hafiz al-Asad's reply and the American clarifications given to Syria in return for its providing a positive reply.

Political sources in Jerusalem have stressed that since this is a matter of existence for Israel, the government will find it hard to reach a decision without having all the details.

Another cause for concern is Secretary of State James Baker's itinerary in the Middle East. According to the plan, Baker will kick off his tour in Damascus, will go from there to Amman, Riyadh, and Cairo, and will come to Jerusalem at the end of his tour. It is feared in the prime minister's bureau that the Americans intend to arrive here with a crystallized offer, which will be presented to Shamir, Levi, and Arens as a fait accompli, to read "take it or leave us alone." Consultations on the issue started in Jerusalem last night. An analysis of the available information has raised suspicions that the United States gave al-Asad a series of commitments in return for the positive reply he gave. In announcements published in Damascus, al-Asad himself stressed that he holds a positive view, not only on the Bush offers, but also of the clarifications that followed them. He said that they constitute an acceptable basis for attaining a general solution for the Middle East conflict. Al-Asad stressed that the U.S. offers—based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which contradict Israel's position—apply to all the fronts and guarantee Palestinian rights. [passage omitted]

At the same time, reports that arrived in Jerusalem from Washington establish that, over the last few days, the Americans have made it clear to Syria that they are not accepting Israel's interpretation of UN Security Council resolutions, though they do not share the Syrian interpretation.

The reports indicate that the United States supports the principle of territories for peace, even if it does not believe that the rule applies to all the territories. From the U.S. point of view, the principle applies to all the land and not only the Sinai, as Israel believes.

It further transpires from the reports that the United States has pledged to stress that it has never acknowledged Israel's application of law to the Golan Heights. It also becomes clear that, in return for Syria's positive reply, the United States promised Syria significant economic aid, to be coordinated with Saudi Arabia. The administration thus kills two birds with one stone: It gives Syria an incentive to enter the process, and indirectly involves Saudi Arabia in the regional effort. These reports have increased Jerusalem's anger over the fact that the United States has so far avoided briefing Jerusalem about the essence of the Syrian reply and the commitments accompanying it. This fact has also increased the fear that Washington is ready to strike a deal with the Arab countries behind Israel's back. It is also possible, however, that in doing so the United States wants to expand al-Asad's commitment to the process.

Report on Acceptance of UN Role in Talks Denied

TA1707111991 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The London TIMES writes today that Israel is now prepared to withdraw its opposition to the inclusion of the United Nations in a regional conference. The report, quoting a high-level source in Jerusalem, appears on the paper's front page.

According to the report, Israel will agree to a passive UN presence at the conference if Syria agrees to direct talks with Israel. We waited 43 years for direct talks, the high-level source is reported to have said, and if the problem is a passive UN presence, the way to those talks is open.

Reacting to this report, the Prime Minister's Office states that Israel adheres to its positions and principles, as spelled out in the prime minister's letter to President Bush over a month ago.

Leaders Ponder Syrian Answer, Baker Visit

TA1607195491 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Report by political correspondent Gadi Sukenik]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] Up to this hour, Israel has not received full details of the Syrian reply, which renders Israel's determination of a position on the future process more difficult. The prime minister has already launched consultations with various elements in anticipation of Baker's visit on Sunday, and Foreign Minister Levi, who arrived in London today, will also be briefed on developments. [passage omitted]

All parties are unanimous on one conclusion: Syrian President al-Asad was very astute in taking this course. The Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, however, is convinced that al-Asad has not suddenly become a pursuer of neighborly peace. They are certain that he simply needs the Americans and has therefore found the right time to give them an answer he knew would please them, one that would turn every scornful glare away from him and toward Yitzhaq Shamir.

Shamir, Levi, and Arens, bearing domestic and outside pressure, will meet with Mr. Baker on Sunday. They will be requested to render their positions more flexible, allowing the Americans to pursue their peace initiative at once. The next stage may come in the form of either a regional peace conference or, possibly, a preceding preparatory encounter.

All this sounds as if it were leading to a historic move, but some in Jerusalem fear that when James Baker arrives in Israel, he will be asked for more precise information, such as the hitherto unpublished part of the five-page Syrian response, or whether the Syrians had been given secret promises before providing an answer. Baker will again be asked why Israel alone is being requested to make tangible concessions, and what the Arabs are ceding.

The U.S. secretary of state will again attempt to convince his interlocutors that the talks will be direct peace negotiations between Israel and each and every one of its neighbors. And, most important, he will explain to Mr. Shamir how crucial it is for him to compromise on his former stands and agree, for instance, to the presence of a UN representative at the peace conference.

However, the right-wing parties in the cabinet, which have so far supported the prime minister, will not easily endorse new concessions, even if they are on procedural matters only, not to mention territories, peace, and the link between them. [passage omitted]

To sum up: It is hard to imagine that when Baker leaves Israel on Monday he will have obtained specific answers guaranteeing a successful peace conference. While he is eager to make progress, Prime Minister Shamir is much less eager and much more cautious.

Despite everything, the majority of Israeli political decisionmakers believe that the odds of launching a peace process have improved this week, although the road may be longer than it appears.

[In a later report, the same source cites U.S. reactions to recent developments and reports on Washington correspondent Ya'ir Stern asking Israeli Ambassador Zalman Shoval: "Why do you think the Americans have given the Syrian response such public significance, defining it as a breakthrough?" Shoval replies: "I imagine that at present, the U.S. Administration would like to present Syria as a country that has come a considerable distance toward the United States. This attitude is motivated by tactical, political, and other considerations."

Asked whether he expects "Baker to pressure Israel to embrace more flexible stands," Shoval says: "Israel does not have to become more flexible where a desire for peace is at stake. Israel has certain principles, which are not frivolous at all. If we stipulate that the peace conference is to be of a certain nature, or that the United Nations should not participate in the conference, it is not because we are dogmatic, but because we do not wish the conference to turn from direct negotiations into a conference aiming—in the Arab eyes—at pressuring Israel into concessions that will not bring peace closer."]

Shamir Rejects G-7 Call on Settlement

TA1707092591 Tel Aviv YEDIOT AHARONOT in Hebrew 17 Jul 91 pp 1, 13

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer, Yohanan Lahav in London, Rami Tal in Washington, and Bina Barzel]

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir has rejected with "revulsion" the linkage the heads of the seven industrialized countries made between halting settlements and lifting the Arab boycott on Israel. This was reported by sources close to Shamir.

U.S. President George Bush, who is attending the London conference, said last night that now that Syria has provided a positive reply, Shamir's reply to Baker will serve as Israel's test case of whether it really wants peace.

The sources noted that Mr. Shamir believes that the Arab boycott, which has been in effect for 43 years, has no relevance whatsoever to the issue of settlements, which has to be discussed within the framework of direct and bilateral negotiations between Israel, the Arab countries, and the Palestinians.

Yosi Ben-Aharon, Prime Minister's Office director general, termed the G-7 call to halt settlements in return for lifting the Arab boycott "miserable."

At the same time, the Syrian reply has turned on "the alarm signals" in the right-wing parties. They will meet Shamir later today; last night they warned that any deviation from Shamir's previous reply to President Bush (in which he rejected the continuing conference, the presence of a UN representative, and demanded that Israel be given the right to veto the Palestinian representation at the conference)—could cause the government to fall apart.

Ge'ula Kohen, deputy minister of science and technology, said yesterday: "This government was set up to prevent a surrender to pressure. We will remain in it as long as it does not surrender. We are going to meet Shamir to remind both foreign and domestic elements that there is a limit to the pressure this government can take. If the pressure becomes intolerable, I believe we will opt for early elections."

The Prime Ministers's Office director general said last night that there is no basis to the evaluations that Syria's reply to President Bush and the positive U.S. reaction to it have pushed Israel into a corner.

Ben-Aharon said that "even if the Syrians had written the biblical Book of Lamentations as their reply to President Bush, the Americans—wanting to pass the ball to the Israeli court—would have called it a positive response."

Speaking to our political correspondent, Ben-Aharon said that the issue of the economic boycott that the Arab countries apply to countries trading with Israel concerns all the Arab countries, including those which are not in a state of war with us.

In their resolution, Ben-Aharon said, the heads of the world's richest countries legitimized this outrageous act by the Arab countries.

Delivering a hint to President Bush, Ben-Aharon said that "there are elements whose obsession about settlements causes them to rush colleagues to pass resolutions such as this."

Ben-Aharon warned that "such resolutions will achieve nothing—neither the halt of Israeli settlements, nor the termination of the Arab boycott against Israel; to the contrary: it will perpetuate both phenomena."

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir yesterday refrained from publicly reacting to the positive Syrian reply to President Bush's offers of compromise.

Shamir has decided that when James Baker arrives here early next week, he will demand that the full text of the Syrian reply to Bush's offers be publicly presented. [passage omitted]

Call Termed 'Scandalous,' 'Unfortunate'

TA1707043991 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] How does Jerusalem react to the call of the seven industrialized countries meeting in London to halt settlement, coupled with their call to lift the Arab boycott on Israel? Well, the reaction of officials in Jerusalem is: This is an unfortunate and odd statement. Our political correspondent Arye Golan reports:

Officials in Jerusalem term the link established by the leaders of the seven industrialized countries meeting in London between the Arab boycott and settlement as scandalous. It is odd that the seven industrialized countries should, of their own volition, sanction—by means of the Arab boycott—the punishment of firms in their countries who do business with Israel. This makes no sense whatsoever, officials in Jerusalem say.

Avi Pazner, the prime minister's media adviser, told Qol Yisra'el: There is no link and there should be no link between settlements and the Arab boycott. The boycott is a type of economic warfare against us which has existed since the State of Israel was founded and which is directed not only against Israel but against all countries maintaining commercial relations with it. The question of settlements, Pazner said, is one of the issues which will be discussed in due time, when negotiations are held on the permanent status of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Settlements are part of the territorial negotiations with Jordan, officials in Jerusalem state this morning, wondering about the meaning of the unfortunate pairing of them with the Arab boycott against Israel. Well, there can only be one meaning: that this is a very well-orchestrated international effort before Baker's arrival in Israel on Sunday.

Arens Aide on Willingness for Hostage Talks

TA1607170091 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] We have a reaction to an AP report broadcast earlier that Shaykh Musawi of the Hizballah had accused the United States of not exerting pressure on Israel to help free Western hostages.

Dani Nave, the defense minister's media adviser, says that on several occasions in the past Israel has expressed its willingness to enter negotiations and stated that it is willing to release Lebanese prisoners in return for the release of Western hostages and Israeli Defence Forces [IDF] POW's and MIA's. Nave added that so far, the Hizballah has denied International Red Cross personnel access to IDF captives, which is the reason for the delay in beginning the negotiations.

All Planes Return After Raid in Lebanon

TA1707081891 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] An SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldier and a Hizballah terrorist were killed this morning in an incident on the border of the security zone in south Lebanon. A second Hizballah terrorist may have been killed as well.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the incident occurred near the village of Majdal Zun. Hizballah members attacked an SLA patrol with automatic gunfire and RPG shells. An SLA soldier was wounded and later died. SLA troops returned fire and set out in pursuit of the terrorists. One terrorist was killed and a second may have been killed in the pursuit.

An AFP correspondent reports that Israeli Air Force planes raided Hizballah targets this morning, some 4 km north of the security zone. Confirming the raid, the Israeli Army spokesman stated that all our planes returned safely to base.

IDF Spokesman Denies Raid on Zibqin

TA1607174491 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] The Israel Defense Forces [IDF] spokesman has denied reports from Lebanon that Air Force planes attacked a Shiite village north of the security zone. The Lebanese Police reported that two Phantom jets launched rockets at a terrorist outpost near the village of Zibqin. As was said before, the IDF spokesman had denied the report.

Civil Administration Given Powers in Territories

TA1707055491 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpt] Defense Minister Moshe Arens has transferred punitive powers in the territories from the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to the Civil Administration. A document formulated by the Defense Ministry approves a series of new procedures concerning punitive measures, whereby the IDF is no longer allowed to impose curfews on locations in the territories as a form of collective punishment. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports:

The new document formulated by the Defense Ministry curtails the IDF's punitive powers and transfers them to Major General Dani Rothschild, coordinator of activities in the territories. The new procedures are also meant to eliminate unnecessary friction between the Civil Administration and IDF commanders in the territories, occurring particularly after incidents when the IDF demands the imposition of widespread curfews on the population. Among other things, the document states that extensive curfews on an entire town will only be approved by the defense minister. For the most part, the document forbids curfews in the territories unless they are imposed for a definite period of time. The document further states that IDF commanders in the territories are not authorized to order the uprooting of trees, demolition of houses or fences as a form of punishment, or even to order the arrest of Palestinian notables. These powers have now been transferred to the coordinator of activities.

The new powers granted to the Civil Administration are compatible with the policy of General Rothschild, who has recently eased some standing procedures, such as stopping body frisks on the Jordan River bridges and conducting spot checks instead. The new procedures are meant to prevent collective punishments that hinder efforts to distinguish between the bulk of the population and the hard core who engage in terror. [passage omitted]

Palestinians Plan for Baker Meetings

TA1607163691 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Activists in the territories today began consultations on the expected visit by Secretary Baker. Faysal al-Husayni will return earlier than planned from Paris to take part in the discussions. Our correspondent Moti Amir says that it is possible that the activists will present the visiting secretary a document stating their positions on the peace process. The document will stress that they will not retreat from the demand that a representative from East Jerusalem take part in the peace conference.

The Communist Party in the territories, which has so far refused to send representatives to meetings with James Baker, has changed its position, and is now willing to do so. At the same time, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine still rejects participation in the peace process.

Press Comments on Syrian Response to Bush

TA1607142191

[Editorial Report] All Israeli newspapers on 16 July carry ample reportage and comment on the Syrian response to President Bush's peace initiative. All note the warm reception al-Asad's response has triggered in the United States and remark on the reactions of Israeli ministers and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir.

All newspapers except HADASHOT address the topic in their editorials. Under the headline "Soft Words, Very Big Stick," Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on page 6 writes that "if, as has been reported, the only difference between the Syrian position and that of Israel is over the presence of a United Nations' observer, the government should reconsider its stance." Nevertheless, the paper adds, "while a positive reply and the softening of Hafiz al-Asad's diplomatic stance is welcome, Israel would undoubtedly feel more comfortable if Syrian words were not so harshly contradicted by Syrian deeds." Noting the "striking" resemblance between the two dictators, al-Asad and Saddam Husayn,

the paper terms as "puzzling" the U.S. Administration's attitude to Syria's military buildup, including the acquisition of improved Scud missiles, and remarks on the "transparent drive to cleanse Syria of its well-earned terrorist-sponsor stigma." The editorial concludes by saying "if Syria really wishes to change direction and pursue peace, it should shun the Saddam tactics of talking conciliation, while preparing for a war of aggression. And while rightly welcoming Syria's softening line, the U.S. may want to consider which message to heed: the 'positive reply' or the Scuds."

In its editorial on page 2 entitled "A Positive Syrian Response That Is Negative," Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew writes that in the wake of the positive U.S. reaction, President Bush "will bring all his weight to bear on Israel to reverse its objections to the inclusion of a UN representative in the conference and to periodic meetings. To that end, the paper says, Bush will seek the assistance of the European and Soviet leaders, and he may even coordinate with them the pressures to be brought upon Israel." Israel, the paper notes, will not necessarily consider positive every proposal the United States views favorably. Consequently, HATZOFE believes that "we may be in for a period of tension between Israel and the United States over the interpretation of the Syrian response."

Headlined "Al-Asad Is Not Slamming the Door," a page B1 editorial in Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew notes that the delay in the Syrian response to Washington created the impression that "the political process initiated by the United States had gone into a deep freeze." Now that the letter has finally been received, the paper writes, we will have to wait and see "how the fine print in the Syrian response affects the overall assessment of the U.S. leadership." The paper notes that the latter will probably try hard not to undo its initial reaction, as hastily voiced by Secretary of State James Baker, who termed it "positive." Likud and Tehiya circles, according to the paper, expected the peace process "to drop dead," but in the wake of the Syrian response this "no longer seems as realistic as it has in the last few weeks." Although it is not yet certain that the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, and Israel will be summoned to Washington and that Bush and Gorbachev will issue invitations to a peace conference, "the eulogies dedicated to the peace process now seem to have been premature. The process may yet be revived, and at this point it looks like al-Asad has succeeded in passing the buck for thwarting the negotiations to Yitzhaq Shamir," HA'ARETZ concludes.

In its editorial on page 9 entitled "It Shall Break Forth Out of the North," Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew writes that al-Asad has outwitted Shamir. Instead of Shamir's "no," the paper says the Syrian president responded with "yes, but..." or "yes, on the condition that...." While Israel's reply blocks the implementation of the U.S. Middle East initiative "and personally provokes Bush and Baker, whose reputations are on the line," DAVAR notes the Syrian response "gives them more than the end of a thread to unravel the knots." Moreover, DAVAR notes, al-Asad's letter shows that "he has concluded that Bush is expected to pressure Israel if the latter digs in its heels. Israel is at a crossroads pointing in two opposite directions: dialogue or war. Shamir will increasingly be called upon to choose between the two. As is his way, he will probably opt for a third option, namely, calling for an early election."

In an editorial entitled "Hot Summer" on page 7, Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew writes that the Syrian response to President Bush's proposals "heralds a hot political summer, and perhaps even progress toward the summoning of a regional conference in October." The paper notes that if he decides to stop the peace process, Shamir "will choose the composition of the Palestinian delegation as the breaking point." DAVAR goes on to say that "the prime minister apparently believes that if he were to call for an election over this issue, which he would depict as 'the battle over Jerusalem,' he would win with a majority." Shamir, however, the paper says, may fail to blow up the negotiations and may also be wrong in his assessment of the political intentions of the Israeli voter. Also, many members of the Likud could deem it unwise to thwart the process "before it has even begun, and in that event the long-awaited conference may convene in the fall."

Headlined "Al-Asad 'Did Not Do Us A Favor,'" Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew writes on page 2 that the Americans and the Syrians have now put Israel to "an open, clear, and serious test. The sophistry so popular with the Prime Minister's Office will not only not help this time, but will even be harmful. Those who steered Israel along this course should have known all along where it would lead. If they do not come up with a clear answer to the new challenge, they will be shouldering a very serious responsibility," the paper cautions. "The prime minister and his advisers will have to draw on all their resources so that we are not denounced as the country that curbed the political process," the paper concludes.

Entitled "The Syrian Response," the editorial on page A12 of Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew notes that although Israeli officials hastened to say that they had not yet been apprised of the full contents of al-Asad's letter, at first glance the Syrian president would seem to have chosen "a sophisticated course and timing." He timed his response to coincide with the eve of the meeting of the seven industrialized countries in London and, the paper notes, although it may not be included in the official agenda, the issue will be discussed in the hallways and "al-Asad will be portrayed in a positive light and will not be labeled as a peace refusenik." As for the substance, MA'ARIV adds, "he is treading the same cautious path as the Israeli Government in a bid not to undermine the process preceding the process." MA'ARIV concludes that "if any process begins now, it will be a real surprise to both Shamir and al-Asad."

In commentaries, 'Aqiva Eldar writes in page A2 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew that Shamir now has three options. The first, according to Eldar, is "to allow elements he does not trust to drag him into a process officially based on a withdrawal from territory," a move that would encounter the fierce opposition of his extreme right-wing partners. Although Peres has promised not to ally with the right wing to bring down the government, Eldar notes that "Shamir may face trouble from his own camp (Ari'el Sharon, Beni Begin, Binyamin Netanyahu, and others) which would result in the government's fall."

A second option, Eldar writes, would be to halt the process by persisting in his opposition to the Palestinian representatives and a UN role.

The third option, according to Eldar, would be for Shamir "to drag James Baker into protracted bargaining over the gaps between the government's position and the conditions spelled out in the Syrian response" when the secretary of state arrives here next week. The prime minister will try to persuade the U.S. Jewish community, public opinion, and Congress "to back his position and to bring pressure to bear on the administration to put the ball back in the Syrian court, in the hope that this time it might get stuck there," Eldar believes. If this fails, Eldar thinks that Shamir may call an early election, "which would help him shirk the Likud convention and accelerate the crisis over immigrant absorption and economic inflation."

Eldar notes that "Bush needs the faith and support of the Arabs for his steps against Iraq and will not easily tolerate Israel's rejectionism." Such rejectionism could also have domestic reverberations, according to Eldar, if SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] and Degel Hatora "make good on their threats to quit a government that brings Israel closer to the next war."

In a commentary entitled "The Syrian-American Connection" on page 19 of YEDI'OT AHARONOT, 'Uzi Mahanaymi writes that although the Syrians are a tough adversary in negotiations "there can be no comprehensive peace in the region without them." Therefore, "if this opportunity, however fragile, to reach peace is missed, the alternative will be a ruthless war." Mahanaymi believes that if Israel fails to meet the challenge, after the U.S. presidential elections the Americans may be tempted to resort to the formula Henry Kissinger used at one time with Egypt and tell the Syrians: "You start a small war. We will know when to step in and stop both you and the Israelis in time." Therefore, he sees Israel's choice as being between "a possible accommodation with the Syrians now or an agreement at the end of a cruel war, the likes of which we have never experienced before."

Entitling his comments on page 9 of DAVAR "An Entirely Different Ball Game," Hemi Shalev writes that "if anything, al-Asad deserves an Oscar for his dramatic sense and perfect timing." President Bush will broach the issue in his talks with world leaders in London this week with "a feeling of gratitude toward al-Asad for the opportunity he has granted him and resentment toward Israel for its negative answers and its continued settlement activities," Shalev writes.

Shalev believes that in the next few days the Israeli Government will "lash out" at the agreements apparently reached between the United States and Syria on the implementation of the principle of "land for peace" entailed in Resolution 242. Nevertheless, Shalev argues, "Shamir will not press his luck by rejecting the U.S. invitation to attend a peace conference. He will not place Israel in unprecedented isolation and totally jeopardize the aid for immigrant absorption. He will look for some other way to delay and procrastinate and, if left with no other choice, he will pretend to give a positive reply." This will probably lead to a coalition crisis, which leads Shalev to the conclusion that "we are not in for a political process, but for elections."

King Husayn, Bush Discuss Issues by Telephone

JN1607201791 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] This evening, U.S. President George Bush held a telephone conversation with His Majesty King Husayn on the latest positive developments concerning peace efforts to work out a solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute and the Palestinian question.

Lower House Debates al-Masri Policy Statement

JN1607195891

[Editorial Report] Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic at 1700 GMT on 16 July, in its main newscast carries a 106-minute video recording of the parliamentary debate, which began this morning, on Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri's policy statement.

The first to address the house was Deputy Faysal Ibn-Jazi, who says the government statement "is tantamount to our demands and those of our people and chamber." He hopes the government will fulfill its promise to address poverty and unemployment in the southern villages of the kingdom as well as the issues of agriculture and water.

Deputy Layth Shubaylat begins his speech by reviewing regional political developments, and successive governments' handling of public affairs. He calls on the house to vote for Tahir al-Masri, whose "personality and name symbolize all the values of national unity." But he makes a yes vote for the government conditional on al-Masri coming up with a new lineup for a "veritable national coalition government preceded by sufficient consultations." Shubaylat urges the Islamists, Democrats, and Nationalists to reach a common ground inspired by their campaign planks so that they become "the backbone of a programmed coalition, and join the government lineup directly or indirectly."

Next to take the floor is Deputy Sulayman 'Arar of the National Bloc who begins by stating that Jordan has been endowed with a people free of the scourges of "fanaticism and factionalism," plaguing the present age, and praising the country's leadership as "far-sighted, and historic" and working for the cause of Arab issues led by the Palestine question. 'Arar states that the National Bloc will vote for the new government.

Next to address the house is Deputy 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, speaking for the Constitutional Bloc. He devotes his speech entirely to a comparison between an address the present prime minister made to the house as a deputy during the debate on the outgoing government's policy statement and his government's policy statement. Al-Rawabidah quotes several times from Tahir al-Masri's speech as deputy and then as prime minister in his policy statement to make the point that the policy statement of the present government is not any better than that of Mudar Badran's, which al-Masri had criticized as abounding in "highflown, hollow expressions."

Al-Rawabidah also faults al-Masri's policy statement for failure to address the mounting cost of living and a public demand that the draft be reduced from two years to one year. He concludes by stating that the government lineup does not measure up to its policy statement.

Speaking for the deputies of the Islamic Movement Bloc—the Muslim Brotherhood—Deputy Ahmad Qutaysh al-Azayidah says his group rejects recent political efforts to settle the Palestine question. Reviewing the al-Masri government's policy statement, al-Azayidah contends that the items covering services, production, energy, joblessness, and bureaucratic reform are not handled any differently from previous governments. He concludes by saying that the team chosen by al-Masri for his government is not competent to shoulder the responsibility of governing at "this critical juncture in the history of our country and nation," and that, the deputies of the Islamic Movement Bloc will withhold confidence from the government.

Deputy Nadir Muhammad Subh al-Zuhayrat, noting that the government policy statement gives due attention to the Armed and Security Forces, goes on to urge the government to respect a parliamentary vote on forgiving debts of small farmers, and notes that the government statement failed to tackle the high prices of agricultural production. Al-Zuhayrat, however, failed to disclose his intentions as to whether he will vote for or against the new government.

Next to speak is Deputy Fakhri Qa'war for the Democratic Grouping. He praises the al-Masri government statement and choice of ministers, but lists a number of issues he hopes the prime minister will address when he responds to the remarks made during the debate on the government statement. Among other demands, Qa'war urges the elimination of the traces of the abrogation of martial law, citing political prisoners, and those whose employment was terminated on political grounds.

In his speech to the house, Deputy Salim al-Ghuwayri states that the government statement adheres to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, and reflects popular ambitions. He promises to vote for the government, and urges the house to also give an affirmative vote.

Deputy Nayif al-Hadid praises the government policy statement and presents a number of tribal demands. He then calls for reinforcing national unity.

Deputy al-Hadid is followed by Deputy 'Abdallah Zurayqat who reviews the challenges and responsibilities facing the government. He calls on "the government to practice its role fairly." He congratulates the prime minister for his selection of his team.

Deputy Muhammad al-Dardur praises the government's decision to abrogate martial law. After dealing with internal problems in his electoral district, al-Dardur says he will present his demands in detail in the coming period.

Deputy Husayn Mujalli begins his speech by warning against the dangers facing the Arab nation. He then reiterates his objection to U.S. peace efforts, calling on the government to reject them. He then comments on issues included in the policy statement such as national unity. Concluding his speech, Deputy Mujalli announces that he "will not only withhold support from the government, but also urges the ministers to leave it as soon as possible."

Deputy Muhammad Abu-'Alim speaks about planting Israel in Arab land. He says that because of the great numbers of immigrants, Israel plans to expand and to get rid of Islam. He calls for closing ranks to deter danger and to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque. He then says: "The valiant Jordanians only fear God. They will lie in wait for all those who let themselves be seduced into plotting against Jordan and the unity of its sons."

At the beginning of his speech, Deputy Muhammad 'Addub al-Zabn calls for supporting this democratic experiment through cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities, cohesion of the Jordanian community under its wise leadership, and safeguarding the homeland. He concludes by saying that six months from now he will request that a discussion be undertaken on the internal policy and to what extent the policy statement has been implemented.

Deputy 'Isa Madanat touches on the government's concern to reinforce national unity and the sovereignty of law. He also speaks about current international issues and their effects on Arab issues, particularly the Palestine question. He then deals with the economic problems in Jordan, particularly unemployment and foreign debts. He calls for laying down plans to solve these problems through activating the national economy and new investments.

Deputy Jamal al-Sarayirah, the last to speak in today's session, reviews the difficult situation in Jordan. He adds that this situation requires "unique" men to shoulder their responsibilities to the homeland. He then announces that he will withhold support from the government of Tahir al-Masri.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Latif 'Arabiyat, speaker of the House of Representatives, then adjourns the session until 1000 [0700 GMT] tomorrow to continue the debate of Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri's policy statement.

Paper Says Syrian Reply Boosts Chances of Peace

JN1607154191 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 16 Jul 91 pp 1, 18

[Editorial: "Toward an Urgent Arab Meeting"]

[Text] Undoubtedly, the Syrian reply to the U.S. President's message, which contained an unconditional acceptance of the U.S. proposals on convening the proposed peace conference, has moved the ball deep into the U.S.-Israeli court. By doing so, the Arab countries have given all that is possible to advance the U.S. diplomatic initiative which has long been stumbling and about to founder on the rock of Israel's rejection of the just and comprehensive peace option.

Hence, while waiting for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's return on a fifth tour of the capitals of those countries concerned with the Middle East peace conference, we hope that the U.S. secretary will be able to make the first practical step toward a political settlement in the Middle East. By this we mean fixing a date for the convening of the long-awaited peace conference.

The Syrian response, described by U.S. officials as positive, has activated the diplomatic initiative in the region and opened more doors on the possibility of holding the proposed peace conference. Hence, it is now necessary to move quickly toward a meeting that coordinates the positions of the concerned Arab parties before entering the conference hall.

It is unreasonable and unintelligible that the Arab parties, concerned with realizing a peaceful settlement to the regional crisis, continue to be disunited, if not divided, at a time when our people are passing through the most dangerous and delicate stage, and the region is about to enter a stage requiring the highest level of advance coordination among the Arab brothers.

We believe that the Syrian reply to the U.S. proposals has boosted the chances of the proposed peace conference. We also believe that the new atmosphere created by this response in the current Middle East political scene necessitates a meeting of the concerned Arab parties to coordinate the stands and policies of those who are keen on not letting the American-Israeli team exploit the present Arab disharmony in weakening the legitimate Arab demands for a just and comprehensive settlement based on the principles of international legitimacy and the UN resolutions. This includes the restoration of all Arab territories and rights, including the Palestinian people's right to self-determination on their own soil.

Release of Nationals Held Abroad Urged

JN1407122191 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 14 Jul 91 p 32

["With Life and People" column by Muhammad Dawudiyah: "The Jordanian Mandelas"]

[Text] Now that Nelson Mandela has been released from the jails of the racist Pretoria regime, and 'Umar al-Qasim [Palestinian activist jailed in Israel approximately 20 years ago] has been martyred in the prisons of the Zionist enemy, the Jordanian political prisoners Dafi al-Jam'ani, Hakim al-Fayiz, Mujalli Nasrawin, Yusuf al-Hisban, al-Burji, and al-Khatib are among those political detainees serving the longest sentences in the world.

There have been numerous demands for releasing these political prisoners. These demands sometimes took the form of petitions, whose authors began with homage and lavish praise, and concluded with a demand for the

release of these Jordanian political prisoners. The media used to carry the praise and accolades, while the prisoners remained in jail. At other times, the demands were communicated by political delegations comprising representatives of nationalist forces and independent figures. Television stations would lay their hands on the guests, who later paid tribute to strategic parity and the anti-imperialist pan-Arab position. Thus, the "hosts" took the fruit, ate it, and threw the pits at the "strugglers," whose naivete was taken advantage of many times.

With regard to the endless talk demanding the release of political prisoners here in Jordan, and after studying the files of those sentenced to pave the way for releasing them, I would like to say that "manliness" must not be exercised exclusively within the country, despite the fact that it is important to demand the release of the Jordanian political prisoners jailed inside Jordan.

Jordanian political prisoners are an indivisible whole. As for the Jordanian political forces which now have deputies and ministers and issue newspapers and leaflets, they should neither fear nor flatter any regime. They should not cover their heads when the issue concerns the Jordanian political prisoners jailed in Syria.

The Arab strugglers raised their voices demanding the release of the progressive Egyptian poet Muhammad 'Afifi Matar. Rallies were held calling for an end to human rights violations in South Africa and south of Mau Mau. Why is everyone silent about the Jordanian detainees who have been under the yoke of injustice, repression, and torture since 1970?

While America—the leader of evil and crimes—and the new world order are criticized for using double standards in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict, all Jordanian national political forces are also criticized for their suspicious silence when Syria's name is called, or when names of the Jordanian political prisoners in Syria come up.

The excuses that the international circumstances do not permit this, or that Syria is now a target and should therefore not be pressured for the sake of the Jordanian political prisoners, are rejected. When a state is targeted from the outside, this state should remove all the reasons for fragmentation and internal divisions and let the people participate in the decisionmaking and the country's fate through genuine democracy, not the democracy of 99.9 percent or yes-and-no.

In addition to the fact that the release of Dafi, Hakim, Mujalli, and Yusuf would be a turning point for halting injustice and repression, it is also a just demand, and should be among the first tasks of the Jordanian democratic forces and the Jordanian human rights group.

We will laugh out loud at any demand to release any political prisoner anywhere if this demand is not preceded by a real demand to release the Jordanian political prisoners who have been detained in Syria since 1970. All demands that exclude these prisoners will be informal, for local consumption, and a sign of failure.

The genuine Jordanian democratic forces should always raise their voices high, and demand the release of our sons, who have been suffering for a long time, and who have been shamefully forgotten without any pricking from our conscience.

Hizballah's al-Musawi on Hostages, Detainees

NC1707103491 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0530 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Excerpts] In an interview with the Voice of the People radio, His Eminence Sayyid 'Abbas al-Musawi, Hizballah secretary general, has said: Despite our reservations regarding the al-Ta'if agreement, we have not objected to the specific moves that have been made. We have demonstrated our positive attitude by indicating that we oppose anything that could lead to internal clashes. We will let time expose the mistakes of al-Ta'if. [passage omitted]

The Hizballah secretary general also said that 'Arafat's policy toward the Lebanese and the Palestinians has been wrong. He was also wrong in supporting Saddam. In any case, the Palestinian people in Lebanon must not bear the consequences of his mistakes, as they are entitled to live in dignity. He noted that Israel is threatening the future of all of us, and the Palestinians must have the means to defend themselves, especially because Israel plans to establish the state of greater Israel. [passage omitted]

Regarding the question of Hizballah surrendering its weapons to the state, His Eminence Sayyid al-Musawi said: Our weapons are for the resistance against Israel. When the justification for these these weapons no longer exists, then some party can discuss this issue with us. He asserted that raising this issue is a crime against our country because the resistance weapons protected the people and towns in Lebanon, and these weapons made it possible for the Army to enter the south. The resistance weapons kept Beirut and all the Arab capitals from becoming easy prey for the Israeli enemy. Today we need the resistance more than ever to protect the nation and the people. He affirmed that raising this issue constitutes a service to the enemy. [passage omitted]

Regarding the hostages issue, his eminence said that this issue has been distasteful ever since the incidents occurred. We said then that we had nothing to do with it, and we have continued to say so all along. The hostage issue has become clear, and the brothers in Iran have expressed their readiness to resolve this problem. The Americans, however, want to prolong this problem to achieve certain political objectives. Had the Americans dealt with this issue in a humanitarian way, the U.S. Administration would have accepted Islamic mediation, and the issue would have been resolved. His Eminence Sayyid al-Musawi said that the issue's only cost to the Americans would be a little pressure on Israel to release the Lebanese and Palestinian detainees. He denied that the hostages issue is being maintained for our protection and said: We are strong and have great capabilities. No one can harm us. We are an important force in Lebanon and the region and are part of a great international Islamic movement. We fear no one. Our protection stems from our faith in God and our affiliation with Him.

Regarding Hizballah's role in bringing about the release of the detainees he said: We consider the issue of the detainees to be the religious responsibility of us all. Serious efforts must be made to save the Muslim detainees in the enemy's prisons. We must do all we can to achieve this goal. The Zionist enemy has Muslim detainees, and we have Jewish detainees in our possession. Intensive efforts must therefore be made to save our detainees. His eminence affirmed that this issue will be pursued in some manner, but there are many complications. Only time will show what results can be achieved.

Ibrahim on Palestinian-Lebanese Relations

NC1607114891 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 0900 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Excerpts] Muhsin Ibrahim, secretary general of the Communist Action Organization, has emphasized that what has taken place between the Army and the Palestinian fighters was a clash based on politics. He said: Thank God there has been no real fighting because the PLO had not made a decision to fight.

In an interview with AL-SAFIR, Ibrahim said: I simply say that these incidents were unjustified and could have been avoided. We as Lebanese and Palestinians are responsible for managing Lebanese-Palestinian relations, as the file on these relations has not been closed and we are also responsible for preventing collisions. This is, however, a joint responsibility.

Ibrahim added: I am taking this opportunity to appeal to Defense Minister Michel al-Murr to forget the tone of victory which characterized the communiques issued on the Army's deployment in the Sidon area because, in fact, since there was no battle it was not necessary to issue such communiques. It is not in our interest for the Lebanese Army to score a victory over the Palestinians, nor is it in the Palestinians' interest to fight the Lebanese Army.

Regarding the Lebanese Government's refusal to hold a political dialogue with the PLO, Ibrahim said: I support the Palestinian call for a political dialogue between the PLO and the government because it serves the joint interests of the two peoples. I have often said that Lebanon's internal peace and its true Arab position hinges on establishing a distinguished relationship with Syria, on restoring the relationship between Lebanon and the Palestinian people, and on Lebanese consensus on the struggle with Israel. I fear that we are moving toward a relationship of struggle with the Palestinian people and a normalization of relations with Israel. [passage omitted]

Responding to a question about Minister Michel al-Murr's statement that he has confidence in the U.S. promises, Ibrahim said: It is up to Minister al-Murr to have confidence in the U.S. promise, and his position comes as no surprise. As for me, I have absolutely no confidence in the U.S. promises on the south. I believe

that Israel will not withdraw from the south and that America will not pressure it to withdraw. [passage omitted]

Palestinians To Hand Over Weapons 17 Jul

NC1707065391 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0515 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] AL-NAHAR has reported that at 2200 last night the military command in the south informed the Defense Ministry and the Army command that the Palestinians have decided to hand over their weapons at 0800 today. Defense Minister Michel al-Murr has told AL-NAHAR: We are waiting for the Palestinians to take this step, which we consider a very positive move that will definitely lead to the end of the siege on the camps. We will respond very positively to this step.

In another development, it has been reported from Tyre that Palestinian groups began gathering heavy- and medium-caliber weapons in warehouses in al-Rashidiyah camp last night. It has also been reported from 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp that the Army has fortified its barriers around the camp, has blocked some auxiliary roads leading to it and has established two roadblocks at its entrances.

Islamic Resistance Clashes With Israelis 17 Jul

NC1707051891 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0315 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] The Islamic resistance has announced that heavy fighting involving automatic weapons and rockets took place at 0100 today on the outskirts of Majdal Zun, 'Ayn al-Tinah, and Taw'amat Niha when its fighters clashed with the Israeli forces and the South Lebanese Army.

Issues Statement on Clash in South

NC1707084091 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0530 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Statement issued by the Islamic Resistance on 17 July]

[Text] The Islamic Resistance issued a statement a short while ago which said: Around midnight on 16 July, the Zionist enemy forces made an infiltration attempt on the Taw'amat Niha axis in western al-Biqa'. The infiltrating force was estimated to consist of a company supported by helicopters and tanks. The soldiers of Islam confronted the enemy force with courage derived from the martyrdom of Abi-'Abdallah al-Husayn, may God's peace be upon him. The Islamic Resistance groups clashed with the enemy forces in a heroic battle which killed or wounded a large number of enemy soldiers. The fierce battles continued until early this morning, when the enemy withdrew in disappointment and defeat covered by heavy artillery fire and air support.

The Islamic Resistance statement added: The soldiers of Islam returned the fire and silenced its source. The enemy helicopters repeatedly tried to land to evacuate their dead and wounded fighters, but our antiaircraft guns foiled their efforts. The last attempt by the Zionist enemy was made at 0500, and the area where the battle occurred continued to be shelled until 0530.

The statement added: At the same time that this abortive attack occurred, heavy fighting took place as the heroes of the Islamic resistance clashed with the forces of the Zionist enemy soldiers and the Lahd agents on the outskirts of Tayr Harfa and Majdal Zun when these forces attempted to infiltrate the two villages. The enemy withdrew under the cover of heavy artillery fire while gunboats fired on the coast from al-Mansuri to Ra's al-'Ayn.

The Islamic Resistance pledged to the martyrs of Islam that it will sacrifice everything in defense of the Islamic nation's dignity.

Army on 'Maximum Alert'

NC1707101191 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] At a time when diplomatic contacts to facilitate Resolution 425's implementation in the south have intensified on several levels, the Israeli occupation forces have intensified their aggressive acts. Over 130 155-mm artillery shells have fallen on the perimeter of Marj 'Uyun and the fringes of Mashgharah, 'Ayn al-Tinah, Suhmur, and the hills of Jabbur and Abu Rashid this morning.

At appoximately 0930, Israeli warplanes raided the hills of al-Sultanah, Jabbur, and Abu Rashid, targeting positions held by the Islamic resistance.

Lebanese security sources have said that Israeli aircraft pursued and attacked Islamic resistance groups as far as the hills overlooking 'Ayn al-Tinah and Mashgharah and that violent clashes are continuing in the area.

A joint Israeli-Lahdist commando force estimated that an infantry company tried to advance toward the positions held by the Islamic resistance in 'Ayn al-Amin area near Taw'amat Niha and south of Western al-Biqa' this morning. The Islamic Resistance confronted it and heavy fighting ensued.

An Islamic Resistance source said that four resistance members have been wounded and another member has been killed and indicated that the advancing forces have sustained many casualties. The source added that military helicopters have repeatedly tried to land to evacuate the casualties but have not been successful due to the ferocity of the fighting. The Lebanese Army forces deployed in the area have been put on maximum alert.

Israeli warplanes continue to fly at a low altitude over the area, particularly over Western al-Biqa', and it has been reported that the town of Mashgharah continues to be shelled. A clash involving automatic weapons and rockets occurred between the Islamic resistance fighters and the agents of the occupation forces near the village of

Majdal Zun at dawn today. Security sources have reported that two of the resistance fighters were martyred and one agent was killed. The Islamic resistance issued a statement this morning in which it said that the clash took place in the western sector of the border area which is under the occupation forces' control.

Israeli Planes Raid Zibqin in Tyre District

NC1607163891 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1625 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] At 1500 today, Israeli aircraft raided the Zibqin valley in Tyre district today, about 10 km from a UN plane carrying Marrack Goulding, UN under secretary general for special political affairs, to the area. Goulding was able to watch the raid following which he met with UN commanders in al-Naqurah.

More on Air Raids

NC1707062391 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0553 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] About five minutes ago, Zionist military aircraft attacked the area where the Islamic Resistance mujahidin had clashed with the Zionist enemy in the south. The enemy aircraft carried out its raids in two waves, drawing antiaircraft fire by the Islamic resistance and starting a fire in the targeted area. We have just been informed that the Zionist military aircraft carried out a third raid against the same area. The damage has not been determined.

Hizballah Bases Attacked

NC1707090991 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0845 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Israeli warplanes attacked Hizballah bases in the area of 'Ayn al-Amin, between Taw'amat Niha and Maydun, about 3 km from the border strip, this morning and have also attacked positions in Mlita, Jabal Safi, and al-Luwayzah. The Israeli forces shelled several areas in western al-Biqa', particularly the areas of Mashgharah, 'Ayn al-Tinah, Jabbur, and Suhmur, where security sources estimate that 150 shells have landed. It has been reported that the Lebanese Army forces in the south have been placed on maximum alert. Meanwhile, Israeli aircraft are continuing to fly over the south and particularly over western al- Biqa'.

UN Envoy Comments on al-Hirawi, Buwayz Meetings

NC1607145991 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Edouard Brunner, personal envoy of the UN secretary general, met with President Ilyas al-Hirawi and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz today. He arrived at Government House a short while ago and is currently meeting with Prime Minister 'Umar Karami.

Following his meeting with Minister Buwayz, the UN official said that during his current mission he has visited Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and now Lebanon. He said he will submit a report on his travels to the UN secretary general.

Brunner added that the purpose of his trip is to investigate prospects for peace and how the United Nations can contribute to the current peace efforts or to any solution based on Security Council resolutions. He said he wants to wait and see how the Baker peace plan will develop.

In light of the Syrian president's response to the Baker plan, he believes that we are at the threshold of an important resolution of the issue.

The implementation of Resolution 425, he added, is on everybody's mind and is the concern of the Lebanese Government and the organizers of the peace conference.

Buwayz Views Syrian, Palestinian Demands

PM1607153491 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Jul 91 p 6

[Interview with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by Tariq Tarshishi in Beirut; date not given]

[Excerpts] Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz says that the Lebanese Army's deployment in the Sidon area facilitates the implementation of Resolution 425, invalidates Israel's excuses, and proves to the world that the time has come for Israel to withdraw. He also believes that no embassy can be opened in Lebanon for the state of Palestine in accordance with the political views expressed regarding the international peace conference and the plans presented vis-a-vis Palestinian participation in it. He emphasized Lebanon's willingness to coordinate politically with the PLO in connection with whatever ideas it may put forward to resolve the Palestinian issue and pointed to Lebanon's desire to see this issue resolved.

Minister Buwayz added that the Syrian military presence in Lebanon no longer has any political links. It is now "linked to a technical situation; that's all." He also said: The more the Lebanese Army can deploy in and control Lebanese territory, the more Syria's military presence can be reduced." He stressed, however, that the Syrian presence can only be reduced gradually and through coordination with the Lebanese Army. [passage omitted]

[Tarshishi] You took part in the talks held in Beirut recently by Frederick Vreeland, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs. Did the U.S. official convey to Lebanon a U.S. pledge to tackle the situation in Jazzin after the Army's deployment in East Sidon?

[Buwayz] Vreeland conveyed a message from President Bush emphasizing that he was following the situation in Lebanon closely, that he supported and admired what had been achieved, that he was also closely following the situation in southern Lebanon, and that he was willing to provide backing for the sake of all the foreign armies'

evacuation from Lebanon. The United States is committed to helping the Lebanese state to restore its full authority over Lebanese territory, and it gives assurances that the U.S. presidential election campaign will not affect this position since George Bush will enter the campaign, proceeding from his current foreign policy, not from his internal, economic, or tax policy. So there will be no vacuum in U.S. foreign policy between the presidential campaign and the date set for the elections. In addition to this and inasmuch as the Lebanese state proves its credibility on the ground and the the Army proves its presence, pressures on Israel will increase.

[Tarshishi] How well can Lebanon deal with the Palestinian demands concerning political dialogue and the political, civil, and social rights for Palestinians residing in Lebanon?

[Buwayz] The Palestinian people clearly enjoy social rights and are subject to Lebanese laws. They are a fraternal Arab people. I believe that there is no problem about improving living standards in the camps nor is there any problem about trust in dealings between the state and Palestinian citizens or between them and the state organs. I believe that the door to a dialogue on all these matters is open.

Regarding the political aspect, Lebanon is committed to the Palestinian issue regarding the PLO as the Palestinian people's legitimate representative and it is willing to coordinate with the PLO over whatever views it may put forward on this matter. I do not believe that the PLO has a final view of the present political issue; that is, the PLO is discussing its entry into the peace conference through a Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. It has accepted this principle. Lebanon's political dealings with it are a theoretical matter, because there is a certain reality which it is following. I believe that the soundest method for those dealings can be defined once deployment is completed and the situation between the Lebanese state and the Palestinians is normalized. This is in the knowledge that Lebanon wants to see the Palestinian issue resolved. As for the idea of opening a Palestinian embassy in Beirut now, we believe that time does not permit it. The PLO is negotiating with Jordan to participate with it in the peace conference through a unified delegation, and the political view revolves around a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation with the West Bank. So we do not believe that there is time now for a discussion on opening an embassy, but we would have no objection to opening an embassy if the the peace conference fails and then the Palestinians come and tell us: Our demand is still for an independent Palestinian state. I do not believe that the political issue could constitute a difficult problem. We have lived with the PLO and the Palestinian people on good terms when the PLO demanded no military privileges that Lebanon could not afford.

There are benefits which Lebanon can grant to the Palestinian issue that other states cannot, and there are demands that it cannot meet that other states can, such as forming Palestinian brigades to liberate Palestine. Lebanon cannot afford that, but the Palestinians can exercise political freedom in Lebanon, such as the freedom to hold conferences and meetings, and this country can grant them a diplomatic platform.

Regarding opening an embassy in Lebanon, a sensitive situation exists in Lebanon. What can we do about the position of Abu-Nidal and Abu-Musa if we give the PLO an embassy, and what can we do with the other groups? Do you want us to give you an embassy? Then others would demand something similar—embassies or missions—thus returning us to the situation of centers' seeking protection against the bombardment of these offices and to the same rationale once again. Lebanon can no longer tolerate this.

[Tarshishi] Is this Lebanese position coordinated with the Syrian position?

[Buwayz] The Syrians understand the Lebanese position fully and know what the criterion is, especially since they deal candidly with Lebanon. In the past the Syrians used to demand that the Palestinians be given more than Lebanon could offer, but now they deal candidly with Lebanon and know exactly what we can offer the Palestinians. So there is an understanding between Lebanon and Syria on this subject, and we have explained to the Syrians our position on the question of the Palestinian embassy and have reached an understanding on it. [passage omitted]

[Tarshishi] In view of the contacts you are making with the United States, do you feel that it has moved some way toward putting pressure on Israel for it to implement Resolution 425 in the South?

[Buwayz] Let us be frank: The United States, like any other state, views its dealings with other states realistically, especially when dealing with a friendly state such as Israel. So the more Lebanon proves that it is capable of becoming a unified state, the more it is prepared to help it, and it has proved this in its dealings with a number of organizations or military groups in support of implementing the al-Ta'if agreement.

Resolution 425 can only be implemented gradually, so the more credibility Lebanon shows, the more the United States will help it to secure gains. Everyone knows that we were concerned about an Israeli intervention that would obstruct the Army's deployment, and everyone knows that we sought U.S. intervention when we sent the Army to the South for the first time five months ago and then when we deployed additional forces. Now the success of this mission has been accompanied by Washington exerting some pressures. We can only say that Washington has helped us regarding both the successful implementation of the al-Ta'if agreement and the Army's dispatch to the South in the three stages that I mentioned. If the Army does prove its presence, I expect Washington to help us recover the Jazzin area prior to creating conditions that will allow us to discuss the process of recovering the entire southern region,

probably through some kind of UN mechanism, perhaps through its forces' advance toward the border area and then by gradually replacing them by the Lebanese. The U.S. position in the South is linked to the Lebanese state's effectiveness and credibility. [passage omitted]

[Tarshishi] The al-Ta'if agreement stipulated the Syrian forces' withdrawal from Lebanon to the access area leading to West al-Biqa' in Hammana, al-Mudayrij, and 'Ayn al-Darah two years after the constitutional reforms are endorsed, and this should happen in September. So will this withdrawal take place?

[Buwayz] I do not believe that the Syrian forces' presence in Lebanon has any political links. I believe that there was some delay on the Lebanese state's part in taking charge of the territory in terms of reorganizing the Army, internal and public security forces, and the other institutions that reached a terrible level of deterioration and weakness. This is why I believe that if we had not sent the Army to the South, the Syrians would have dispensed with their presence in the Beirut area.

For your information, the subject of starting the Syrian withdrawal from several areas was raised before the Army's entry into the South, but the Army leadership thought that it would be better to wait until after the South stage. I believe that the subject of the Syrians' withdrawal will from now on be linked entirely to a technical situation, namely, to the Lebanese Army's ability to deploy. The more it takes control and deploys, the more it will be possible to reduce the Syrian military presence. [passage omitted]

[Tarshishi] Does that mean that Syrian military support is still needed?

[Buwayz] It must be made clear that any reduction in the Syrian presence will only occur gradually, in coordination with the Lebanese Army, and on the basis of the Lebanese Army's ability to take charge of matters on the ground. [passage omitted]

Higher Joint Syrian-Egyptian Committee Meeting

Egypt's Prime Minister Arrives

JN1607144391 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0850 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Damascus, 16 Jul (SANA)—At 1015 today, Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi arrived in Damascus to head the Egyptian side to meetings of the Higher Joint Syrian-Egyptian Committee. Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi led those on hand at Damascus International Airport to welcome the Egyptian prime minister. Also on hand on the tarmac were Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, and Dr. Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz Mursi, Egyptian ambassador in Damascus.

Dr. Sidqi introduced the members of the official delegation accompanying him. Then al-Zu'bi and Sidqi headed to the honor dais where the Egyptian and Syrian national anthems were played. Afterward, they reviewed the honor guard. Dr. Sidqi shook hands with those who were at the airport to receive him: the deputy prime ministers, ministers, and a number of officials, as well as the Egyptian Embassy staff in Damascus.

Dr. Sidqi is accompanied by an official delegation made up of engineer Hasaballah al-Kafrawi, minister of housing, utilities, and new urban communities; engineer Sulayman Mutawalli Sulayman, minister of transport, communications, and maritime transport; engineer Mahir Abazah, minister of electricity and energy; Dr. Muhammad Raghib al-Duwaydar, minister of health; Dr. Yusri 'Ali Mustafa, minister of economy and foreign trade; Dr. Ahmad al-Razzaz, minister of finance; counselor Ahmad Radwan Jum'ah, minister of state for cabinet affairs; Dr. Husayn Kamil Baha'-al-Din, minister of education; and Dr. Hamdi 'Ali 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Banbi, minister of petroleum and mineral resources.

Joint Committee Meeting Opens

JN1607154891 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Mahmmud al-Zu'bi received Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi at 1230 today. The meeting was attended by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, and Dr. Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz Mursi, Egyptian ambassador in Damascus. The talks dealt with bilateral relations and issues relating to the Higher Joint Syrian-Egyptian Committee meetings. The Syrian side, led by Prime Minister Mahmmud al-Zu'bi, and the Egyptian side, led by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, then chaired the first session of the Higher Joint Syrian-Egyptian Committee. [passage omitted]

Al-Asad Receives Prime Minister

JN1607183991 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1720 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Damascus, 16 Jul (SANA)—At 1830 today, President Hafiz al-Asad received Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi. Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi and Egyptian Ambassador in Damascus Dr. Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz attended.

Dr. Sidqi conveyed President Muhammad Husni Mubarak's greetings to President Hafiz al-Asad who thankfully accepted them and asked Dr. Sidqi to convey his greetings to President Mubarak. Talks centered on the work of the Higher Joint Syrian-Egyptian Committee as well as the situation in the region.

Al-Asad Welcomes Mubarak, Delegation

JN1707113291 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt arrived in Damascus at 1230 today on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. Leading those who received him at Damascus International Airport was His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad. Also present were Vice Presidents 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam and Muhammad Zuhayr Mashiraqah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, the deputy prime ministers, the ministers, the Syrian ambassador in Cairo, and the Egyptian ambassador in Damascus.

After a brief rest in the VIP wing, President Hafiz al-Asad and his distinguished guest left in an official motorcade for the Presidential Palace. President Mubarak is accompanied by an official delegation comprising Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, the director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

Mubarak, al-Asad Begin Talks

JN1707143391 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1415 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] At 1300 today, President Hafiz al-Asad and President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt began talks in a closed meeting at the Presidential Palace. They were later joined by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and Dr. 'Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's Office for Political Affairs.

Al-Asad Replies to Gorbachev Letter on Conference

JN1707111691 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0915 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Damascus, 17 Jul (SANA)—Last night Mr. Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, last night received Soviet Ambassador in Damascus Aleksandr Zotov and handed him a letter from President Hafiz al-Asad to USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev. The letter contains Syria's response to President Gorbachev's letter concerning international efforts to convene a peace conference and bring about a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the relevant UN resolutions.

Israel's Calculations Turned 'Upside Down'

JN1607161091 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Inasmuch as leader al-Asad's letter to President Bush created comfort in Washington and world capitals for the positive stand it contains vis-a-vis the peace proposals, it created a tremor in the Zionist entity and forced its officials to speak frankly about a violent shock which will have its deep effects now and in the future. This is because the enemy leaders do not seek peace; they are planning further tension and conflagration in the region as a cover for their aggressive expansionist policies and their feverish planting of the occupied Arab territories with settlements to change its historical and demographic features. Since yesterday, Shamir has been reiterating his rejection of the U.S. proposals and his adherence to his rejection of peace.

The constructive Syrian stand, which honestly responded to international efforts, has turned the enemy calculations upside down and placed them in a tight corner from where they will be forced to show more cards, thereby exposing their aggressive nature. The Arab quarters in general, and the Palestinian quarters in particular, have welcomed leader al-Asad's letter with ardent satisfaction. Everybody is aware of how Israel exploited the Gulf crisis and the Iraqi regime's grave mistakes to tighten its repressive grip on our kinfolk in the occupied territories, to expedite the building of settlements there, and to turn the whole stolen homeland into a big detention camp.

The Syrian position, which was positive without relinquishing principles, will help the international community face its responsibilities to remove the injustice practiced against our Palestinian people and to enable them to exercise their sacred rights, particularly their right to self-determination.

Over the past weeks, the enemy government attempted to reshuffle the cards and mislead world public opinion by holding Syria responsible for not convening the peace conference. In fact, it tried in vain to encourage Washington to convene the conference without Syria's participation because the Syrian stand is committed to international legitimacy, it adheres to its resolutions, and it underscores the UN's effective role and the EC's participation. In addition to all this, the Syrian presence means—in the outcome—the unity of the Arab position, and Israel makes feverish efforts to fragment this unity and to conclude separate deals at the expense of the Palestinian people and their rights.

The Syrian response has exposed Israel's lies and departures from the truth and proved to everyone that Syria earnestly adheres to peace and honestly seeks to establish just and lasting peace based on the international legitimacy and its resolutions. The Syrian position is nothing new. Syria has all along explained that it supports every sincere peaceful effort on the condition that it leads to the implementation of the Security Council resolutions, especially 242 and 338, and to the achievement of a just settlement on all fronts of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In his letter, leader al-Asad expressed satisfaction that President Bush based his proposals on the principles of international legitimacy, gave particular attention to the role of the United Nations and Europe, and pledged that the United States and the Soviet Union will be a driving force behind the peace process. When leader al-Asad expressed this satisfaction, he was placing the entire world community before its responsibility and unequivocally declaring that the Arabs are for a just and comprehensive peace, that they do not love war, and that they have only been defending their homeland against the dangers of the Zionist aggression, which has been going on for more than 40 years. He was also declaring that achieving peace in the region depends on Israel and on the pressure the world community should apply on it so that it will respond to peace endeavors.

President Bush expressed satisfaction with the Syrian response, and so did the U.S. secretary of state. Capitals of the big nations also expressed satisfaction. Thus, the ball, as all observers say, is now in Israel's court, especially since Israel alone is defying international legitimacy, rebelling against UN resolutions, and daily showing further contempt for world efforts aimed at upholding right, removing injustice, and putting an end to occupation and usurpation.

Achievement of peace in the Middle East is contingent on Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and its observance of international resolutions. If Israel does not show any readiness to comply with the will of the world community, then the latter should put things into perspective, as it did during the Gulf crisis. The clock of truth has certainly sounded. Baker's imminent visit to Israel is undoubtedly aimed at dotting the i's and obtaining final and binding answers. Israel today only has two options: Complying with efforts to bring about a just peace or confronting the entire world. It would seem that Shamir has already chosen the latter.

Papers on 'Positive' Reply to U.S. Proposals

JN1707103791 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0315 GMT 17 Jul 91

[From the press review]

[Text] In an editorial headlined "The Syrian Reply and the Israeli Obstacle," TISHRIN says: The letter President Hafiz al-Asad sent to President George Bush with Syria's reply to American ideas about the peace march in the region by all criteria represents a major event. This letter, which occupied a large part of the world's interest, accurately reflected the eagerness of Syria and the Arabs to make international efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East a success. It also expressed Damascus' adherence to legitimate pan-Arab rights. At the same

time, it exposed Israel's political tricks and persistent attempts to deceive world public opinion.

TISHRIN adds: In fact, the Zionists recently tried feverishly to obliterate the facts and portray Syria as responsible for the hindrance of international peace efforts. Moreover, the Zionists claimed that they were concerned about peace, that they wanted to end the tension, and that they adhered to the international will in order to throw dust in the world's eyes and conceal Israel's real behavior.

TISHRIN states that the Syrian reply has aborted all the Israeli allegations charging the Arabs with indifference to peace and has shown that the Zionist entity is responsible in word and deed for hampering international peace efforts. This entity does not want to see matters moving toward a just settlement that will end aggression and occupation and restore usurped rights.

TISHRIN also says: President Hafiz al-Asad's letter to President George Bush shows once again that Syria has been playing a positive and constructive role, that it represents the basic factor for stability, and that it actually wants just, honorable, and comprehensive peace to prevail in the region. The Syrian reply put the whole world and international and American credibility to the test. Syria did what was demanded from it to render the peace march a success and facilitate international peace initiatives.

If the international community in general and the U.S. Administration in particular are serious in promoting their credibility, then it will require efforts to remove the Israeli obstacle, which prevents a just settlement and undermines all opportunities to bring about a just and comprehensive peace. This obstacle can be removed only through serious international endeavors to enforce the world's will and to save international legitimacy and promote its credibility. What happened in the Gulf proves the soundness and effectiveness of such endeavors.

On the same subject, AL-BA'TH says: With its reply to the American proposals on a peace conference, Syria stressed its concern about the dignity of international legitimacy and the establishment of just and lasting peace in the region. The whole world welcomed leader al-Asad's reply to U.S. President George Bush. AL-Ba'th stresses that official and media circles considered President Hafiz al-Asad's reply the most important step in the peace march, which has become a persisting demand that will save the region and the whole world from the evils of war and its destructive results.

The paper adds: Commenting on Syria's positive step, official and media circles have declared that leader al-Asad's reply strongly supports international resolutions and legitimacy. The paper asks: President George Bush said the day before yesterday that President al-Asad's reply to his proposals on a peace conference is very positive. What does this mean? Does this not mean that Syria has never been an obstacle in the peace efforts? Israel alone has been an obstacle on the way to the desired peace.

Afghanistan

Fighting Between Mujahidin, Kabul Forces Reported

Sixteen Posts Reportedly Captured

BK1607162091 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan speak of fierce fighting between mujahidin and Kabul regime troops in different parts of the country. Mujahidin launched an operation in Mohammad Agha District in Lowgar Province and captured 16 Kabul regime military posts of strategic importance. Sixteen regime militiamen including some officers were arrested, while a number of others were killed in the fighting. Four mujahidin embraced martyrdom in the operation.

Rebels Seize Area Near USSR Border

BK1607154091 Hong Kong AFP in English 1534 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, July 16 (AFP)—Afghan mojahedin guerrillas said Tuesday they had captured a strategically important subdistrict of northern Badakshan Province, near the Soviet border.

Zebak, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of Badakhshan's capital Faizabad, fell to the mojahedin on Monday after three days of fighting, according to a message from Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, a leading resistance field commander.

Thirty-six Kabul Government troops were killed and about 170 captured, while the mojahedin suffered two dead and seven wounded, resistance spokesman Sofi Qurban told reporters at the headquarters of the Jamiat-e-Islami faction. Other government soldiers also surrendered, as did a pro-Kabul militia commander, he said.

The capture of Zebak, 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the Soviet Union, opens a new route for the mojahedin to reach the Pakistani town of Chitral, close to the Afghan border, Mr. Qurban said.

Previously it took six days to travel between Chitral and Badakhshan, but the time has now been reduced to only a day, speeding up the transport of supplies from Pakistani territory, he explained.

Ahmad Shah Mas'ud has intensified his operations in northern Afghanistan since mid-May, claiming both the capture of Khajaghar town and the blockade of the Salang highway, a key route between Kabul and the Soviet Union.

Operations Against Kabul Continue

BK1707035491 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Mujahidin have captured Zebak, a subdistrict of Badakhshan Province. Reports say that Afghan mujahidin captured the important area after fierce fighting with the Kabul regime troops. Now, mujahidin are proceeding toward provincial capital Faizabad to capture it. Mujahidin also carried out operations in Mohammad Agha District in Lowgar Province and captured 16 important military posts of the Kabul regime.

Military Operations Crush 'Extremist' Groups

LD1707095591 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Units of the Armed Forces based in Paktia Province inflicted crushing blows on extremist groups yesterday. The BIA [BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY] military section reports: During the operation a number of extremists including nine ringleaders named Salam, Shahid, Merajoddin, Asil, Mastangul, Mohammad Ibrahim, Mohammad Nazir, Haji Mohammad, and Arif were crushed and a number of other were injured. During the operation four BM-2's, one Sakr-30, one Sakr-20, one BM-1, one 32-mm gun, on ZK-1, four DShK's, one arms depot, and two vehicles loaded with arms and ammunition were destroyed.

According to another report, an extremists' supply base in Zaramal District caught fire as a result of the Armed Forces strikes. As a result of the operation a large quantity of extremists' arms and ammunition were destroyed and its guards were crushed.

According to another report, Armed Forces units based in Badakhshan Province mounted a clearing-up operation yesterday in the province. As a result of the operation 50 light machine guns were captured along with some ammunition.

Planning, Finance Ministers Report to Council

LD1607123691 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Jul 91

[Excerpts] The prime minister's press office has told BIA that Prime Minister Fazl Haq Khaleqyar presided at a session of the Council of Ministers today. The meeting discussed important national and international issues. [passage omitted]

Planning Minister Gholam Shahbaz presented a detailed report on the circumstances of the implementation of the country's socio-economic development plan during the first quarter. The report summarized the fulfilment and nonfulfilment of planned targets, work in development projects, implementation of investment and problems in the fulfilment of planned duties.

The attention of the ministers was drawn to the redress of the backlogs of planned duties and to their implementation during the rest of the year. The Planning Ministry report asserted that work on some projects which began many years ago has been postponed, and should be finished soon in order to begin production. It was also decided that backlogs in production of gas, coal, cement, oil and goods of primary need will be redressed in the second quarter of the year. Serious effort shall be made to meet planned targets during the other quarters of the year.

After a comprehensive discussion, the council passed a resolution on the fulfillment of the duties and obligations of ministries and administrations on meeting the planned targets.

The report of the Finance Ministry on state budget implementation during the first quarter of the year was presented by Finance Minister Muhammad Hakim. The report shows that during the first quarter of this year state income increased by 10.6 percent compared with plan targets. A 14.9 percent increase occured in direct taxing of individual businessmen, companies and guilds. As a result, indirect tax, mostly customs duties, increased by 32 percent. Income from investment of state money and property, most of which is derived from the transfer of state corporations' profits to the budget, increased two percent above the plan. The report says income from the sale of licenses and fines fixed by courts of law for criminals, as well as from employee pension contributions increased by more than one percent. The finance minister said there had been a 18.9 percent drop in state expenses during the first quarter, which shows that strict control of the finance ministry and the cooperation of the budget departments is making savings.

A 49 percent reduction occured in the expenses of items included in the balance which form regular [word indistinct] of chapters 7000, 8000 and 9000. The minister added that in view of the increase in income and the reduction of the expenses, the deficit for the first quarter of the year was 26.5 percent less than estimated in the plan.

In another part of the report, the finance minister said that despite the fact that plan results are more than what was estimated, and that income increased and expenses dropped, some shortcomings and defects exist in the management of some budget departments. For instance, some state corporations have not yet sent their finance plans to the finance ministry, despite the fact that three months of the curent year have elapsed. They do not report to finance departments procurement contracts with individuals and private firms.

The reduction of import arrears is slow [words indistinct]

At the end of his report, the finance minister asked all budget units to take serious and effective measures to implement the state budget, especially the full implementation of planned incomes and the reduction of state expenses, observing the principle of saving, and to cooperate with the finance ministry in this important issue.

The session made appropriate decisions after hearing the finance report.

The ministers approved the proposal of the finance ministry to increase the capital of the construction and housing bank and the national bank. In line with the decision of the Council of Ministers, the capital of the Construction and Housing Bank shall be raised from 1.5 billion afghanis to 2 billion afghanis and that of national bank from 2 billion afghanis to 4 billion afghanis. [passage omitted]

Bangladesh

Refund of BCCI Savings Instruments Allowed

BK1607160591 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Savings instruments purchased from the branches of BCCI [Bank of Credit and Commerce International] in Bangladesh can be encashed by the holders in the main branch of Agrani Bank at Motijheel Commercial Area in Dhaka from the 22d of this month. This was stated in a press release of Bangladesh Bank issued in Dhaka today. The savings instruments include Wage Earners Development Bonds, Bonus Sanchai Patra, Five-Yar Bangladesh Sanchai Patra, Pratiraksha Sanchai Patra, and Three-Year Sanchai Patra. The press release said the Agrani Bank will accept instruments against proper receipts and after due scrutiny it will pay the amount as early as possible.

Referendum Bill on President's Assent Presented

BK1607155591 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Excerpt] The Referendum Bill 1991 was introduced in the Jatiya Sangsad [parliament] this afternoon. The bill seeks to provide for a referendum to decide the question of assent of the president to any bill passed in Parliament amending certain articles of the Constitution. Under the Article 142 1-B of the Constitution, referendum is necessary to decide whether the president will give his assent to any bill which amends the Preamble or any provision of articles 8, 48, 56, 58, 80, 92-A, or 142 of the Constitution. Under the Constitution, the responsibility of holding referendum lies with the Election Commission, but no enactment has so far been made to conduct such referendum and this bill has got to provide for it also. Deputy leader of the house and minister in charge of Election Commission in Parliament, Professor Badruddoja Chowdhury, tabled the bill in the house. Salahuddin Yusuf of Awami League raised objections before the introduction of the bill. However, the objection was rejected in the house by a voice vote. The opposition members belonging to the Awami League, BAKSAL [Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League], CPB [Communist Party of Bangladesh], Workers Party, JSD

[Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal], and independents staged a walkout in protest against the introduction of the bill. However, Jamaat-i-Islami and Jatiya Party members did not join the walkout. [passage omitted]

Japanese Diet Members Conclude Four-Nation Tour

OW1607131491 Tokyo KYODO in English 1131 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Dhaka, July 16 KYODO—A four-member Japanese delegation of opposition Komeito Diet members left Dhaka Tuesday for home, concluding their four-nation tour of the region.

The delegation, led by House of Representatives member Yoneo Hirata, arrived Sunday on a three-day "goodwill mission," the second Diet delegation to visit Bangladesh in two months.

Six Japanese Diet members, led by Liberal Democratic Party lower house member Masayoshi Takemura, visited the country last month.

The Komeito group called on the speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, and met Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan.

They also received a briefing on the post-cyclone rehabilitation program, to which Japan provided more than 130 million dollars. Bangladesh was hit by a killer cyclone in late April.

The delegation's main mission was to study the possibility of Japanese participation in United Nations peace-keeping organizations, including international disaster relief operations, embassy sources said.

The delegation visited Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand before coming to Bangladesh.

India

Two 'Militants' Killed, Five Arrested in Punjab

BK1707051891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] In Punjab, two militants have been killed and five arrested while a portion of a railway track was damaged in separate incidents last evening. Two militants were killed in an encounter in Bhatinda District, while three militants were arrested in Gurdaspur and two in Kapurthala District during raids. In Rupar District, a portion of the (Sirhand Nangal) railway track was damaged in a bomb blast near village (Chunghrali) in (Murenda) area late last night. The spokesman, however, described the damage as minor.

Nine Soldiers Killed, 14 Injured in Balaghat

BK1707085691 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] In Madhya Pradesh, nine state armed force jawans [soldiers] were killed and 14 others injured when a police van carrying a search party of 23 jawans were blown up by Naxalites near (Sitapala) village in Balaghat District yesterday. The inspector general of police of Jabalpur range told our Raipur correspondent that the Naxalites had laid mines under Kachcha [unpaved] Road through which the search party was to pass. The injured have been admitted into a hospital. Police sources in Balaghat and adjoining districts in the state and Maharashtra have been put on alert. The state minister of home, DG [Director General] police and other senior officials have rushed to the spot.

Parliament Passes Kashmir Election Bill

BK1607160791 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] The Rajya Sabha has passed the bill amending the People's Representation Act to replace the ordinance which excluded Jammu and Kashmir from the elections to the 10th Lok Sabha. The bill was adopted after the minister of state for law and justice, Mr. R. Kumaramangalam, assured the house that the government will take immediate steps to improve the situation and hold elections in the state. He said article 370 [giving special status to Jammu and Kashmir] was a necessity for Jammu and Kashmir to remain a part of India. The minister further assured the house that serious consideration will be given to fully evolve the local people in the administration of the state. On assurance of the minister, Mr. S.S. Ahluwalia, Congress-I, withdrew his reservation against the ordinance.

Most of the members supported the bill but said only elections can help solve the problems of the state. They also called for the release of innocent detainees and increase in the developmental activities. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], however, opposed the bill, accusing the government of double standard.

Ministers on Exports, Foreign Investment

BK1607091391 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] The commerce minister, Mr. P. Chidambram, says that he expects a nine percent increase in the growth of exports by the end of this year as a result of the trade reforms recently announced. Replying to supplementaries in the Rajya Sabha today, he said that he also expects to achieve an import concession of about 3,000 crore rupees. Mr. Chidambram assured the house that nothing will be exported until the domestic demands are met. He also said that neither the small-scale industries nor the common man will be adversely affected by the new trade policy.

The government is to announce soon steps to promote foreign direct investment on a sizable scale. This was disclosed by the minister of state for finance, Mr. Rameshwar Thakur, in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. The minister said increased foreign investment would help accelerate development, upgrade technologies, and promote exports.

Imports of Petroleum Products To Rise This Year

BK1707022491 Hong Kong AFP in English 0948 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] New Delhi, July 16 (AFP)—India imported 8.66 million tonnes of petroleum products during fiscal 1990-91, and the figure will rise by one million tonnes in the current year ending March 1992, a minister said Tuesday.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister B. Shankaranand told parliament in a statement that the 1990-91 imports were valued at 1.7 billion dollars, and that imports in 1991-92 were expected to be some 9.6 million tonnes.

He added that indigenous production totalled 27.20 million tonnes in 1990-91 but would slide to 26.75 million tonnes in the current year.

The minister gave no reason for the expected fall in production.

Iran

Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Economy, Foreign Ties

LD1707093891 Tehran IRNA in English 0653 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, 17 July, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here Tuesday night the country's economy is moving on the right track and reiterated Iran is not after making enemies and presently enjoys good relations with those interested in cooperation with Iran.

Speaking to the Iranian diplomats abroad and the deputies and directors of the Foreign Ministry who had called on the president accompanied by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, he said Iranians living abroad should be treated well and not be considered strangers. The latter approach, he said, will tempt them to fall into the trap of the blasphemy.

Rather, he told the diplomats who just concluded a seminar in the holy city of Mashhad, by creating the necessary facilities the Iranians living abroad should be encouraged to return home.

Turning to the issue of export of the Islamic revolution, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said this will not be materialized by force. "In my opinion the best way for export of the revolution is to create conditions at home so that the others realize the correctness of our path."

Emphasizing the important role of economy in social life, the president noted the Third World countries because of their economic problems are forced to accept policies of others. Therefore, he added, we must lay more emphasis on economic issues.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani added that the econmic issues are moving on the right track and that attempts are being made to achieve a reasonable balance to present an acceptable pattern.

Turning to high prices, the president said that in a bid to offset it the administration increased salary of the government employees by 30 percent last Iranian year (ended 20 March 1991) adding that in the same year prices rose by only 9 percent. He added that the government is making efforts to harness growth of high prices so that the issue can be solved.

As for criticisms on the first post-revolution five-year development plan, the president said, these oppositions stem from the atmosphere of political freedom and can ultimately be "constructive".

Stressing that there exists no problem in the country he said "no major action is taken without having sought the opinion of the leader and secured his approval."

Need for Social Security Programs

LD1607223791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Excerpts] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has stressed the establishment of coordination and order among the country's social aid organizations and planning to uproot poverty and securing social justice for the masses.

The president was speaking on the occasion of the start of Social Security and Welfare Week at a meeting of officials and a group of employees of social security and welfare organizations. He praised individuals who give their time and effort to the deprived and the meek and said that their humanitarian activities are important and Islamic deeds. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said that the requirement of the system and of Islam is that we should not have many helpless and meek individuals in society. He added: Fundamental efforts should be concentrated on preventive measures so as to reduce the number of people who need assistance. The president said that social security programs should be drawn in such a way as to give people assurance and security about their future. [passage omitted]

He noted: Because of the war that was imposed on us and the revolutionary process, we presently have a large number of people needing support; and if we look at the huge budgets of various institutions and organizations for the deprived and the meek, which matches the budget of many countries, we can see the depth and extent of this social tragedy and how it weighs heavily on the country's budget.

He added: We should reach self-sufficiency by increasing production, employment, and productivity in society; by information on health and diet and family planning schemes. Of course, the enemies do not want this Islamic country to succeed with its revolutionary programs aimed at bettering the quality of people's lives. But in spite of this, the strength of our people's abilities is more than this. [sentence as heard]

At the start of this meeting, Mr. Abol-Fazl Gharrazi, managing director of the Social Security Organization, submitted a report on the activities of that organization. [passage omitted]

Mr. Yargaravesh, head of the State Welfare Organization, said in a report presented to the president: Our ultimate aim is to turn households into nondependent entities and we intend to make the disabled in society self-sufficient. The head of the Welfare Organization said that the organization takes care of 20,000 guardianless children and disabled, and added: The organization has 3,300 units providing services all over the country, approximately 500 of which are in remote villages. He continued: Currently thousands of addicts are receiving treatment in 16 Welfare Organization centers and we are also active in combatting moral decadence and begging.

Commentary Views 'Stillborn' Damascus Agreement

LD1707084491 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0952 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpts] The foreign ministerial session of the six Arab states of the Persian Gulf littoral, and Egypt and Syria, known as the six-plus-two session, was finally convened in Kuwait yesterday afternoon following a week's delay. In the session which is to last for two days, the foreign ministers of the eight Arab countries will attempt to reach a common stance and understanding in terms of the Damascus agreement. [passage omitted]

The said agreement aims to achieve a number of fundamental targets. First, the establishment of an Arab security system; second, the laying of the foundations for an Arab economic cooperation as the principle support base of a security system; and ultimately the establishment of political congruity and harmony among the member countries. However, so far, the members of the eight parties involved not only have failed to put forward any practical initiatives toward realizing the aforementioned three targets, but relations between the eight countries have given way to intense, often contradictory viewpoints, as well as various actions and reactions, arising out of various interpretations and constant vacillations with regard to the said agreement, so much so that, in the opinion of a number of political analysts, the Damascus agreement has eventually turned into an axis of discord within the Arab community.

The contention between Egypt and Kuwait constitutes a significant part of this sphere of inter-Arab disagreements. [passage omitted] On the whole, disagreements between the eight countries, in the wake of their congruity on the Damascus agreement, can be traced back to a number of factors: first, that Egypt, due to its economic problems and political ambitions, seeks to secure for itself a prominent political role in the rich Persian Gulf region, to which end it regards the implementation of the Damascus agreement as the most suitable channel for achieving its economic and political goals in the region, laying emphasis on the need of its implementation and the adherence of the Persian Gulf states to their obligations.

On the other side, however, stands the United States, which opposes this policy, and seeks to hold the pivotal role in what is called the safeguarding of the security of the Persiaa Gulf Arab countries, by virtue of the continued presence of a limited U.S. military force in the region. It is from this angle that political analysts have been scrutinizing the simulataneous departure of the Egyptian forces from Kuwait with the U.S. war minister's visit to that sheikhdom, two months ago.

On the other hand, the Arab littoral states of the Persian Gulf are more or less aware of the fact that their real security is found in a regional inter-zone security system, without the presence of Arab and Western forces from outside the region. For this reason, there is a strong desire by these countries for the establishment of such a system, a desire which has been deepened by the explosive and ambiguous situation in Iraq, where any internal crisis—which is more or less anticipated—could overshadow the security conditions of the region.

These three factors—that is to say: the pressure exerted by Egypt and Syria on the implementation of the obligations stipulated in the Damascus agreement; the U.S. pressure aimed at imposing itself on a security system; and the necessities essential for real security—have been catalytic in the adoption of different and incompatible stances, and the outbreak of disagreements among the eight countries. The depth of these disagreements is to such an extent that a number of official Egyptian sources have rated the possibility of success of the current foreign ministerial talks in Kuwait as low.

The constant changes in the stances of a number of countries in terms of the Damascus agreement, and the vacillation of some others in terms of its ability to achieve security, has at present, placed this Arab axis on the verge of disintegration to the extent that informed sources have said that the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf littoral consider the Damascus agreement as a chain of temporary security measures, which has taken shape solely within the framework of the sensitive regional security conditions, and that it should not be regarded as a military agreement. Hence, the basis of the said agreement which was the establishement of an Arab security system, has, as predicted, become totally weak and baseless. In any case, when the Damascus agreement was signed in Syria four months ago, a number of sources

described it as the birth of a new Arab forum, born out of the multinational coalition, but now no one harbors any doubt in the fact that the said infant was stillborn.

Larijani on Iraqi Nuclear Program, Coup Plot

NC1307165591 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 4 Jul 91 p 16

["Weekly Political Newsletter—What is Happening in Iraq?" by Dr. Mohammad Javad Larijani, Foreign Ministry Adviser]

[Text] 1. Had Iraq really reached a sensitive point in nuclear weapons research—a fact hidden from the public eye only to be discovered by spies a few days ago—when UN teams rushed to the site where the altercation occurred? While we cannot reject this claim, some other justification for the verbal battle between Iraq and the United States and the renewed threat of use of force must be available.

2. Last week, the AP news agency reported that Saddam had purged more than 9,500 Iraqi military officers on charges of being involved in a coup d'etat. If this report is true, it may be said that the present feud between Iraq and the United States is not due to the inspection of nuclear facilities in Iraq but because the U.S. schemes for a coup d'etat in Iraq have been foiled and Washington is angry.

3. If that is true, the United States has made considerable progress in encouraging the armed forces to stage a coup and, more importantly, to establish a government suited to U.S. political objectives in Iraq! If the U.S. plan for Iraq succeeds, we should witness the transition of the Saddam era to a post-Saddam era without a people's uprising. The Army, or an important part of it, will support this change and its consequences.

Along with repairing the rubble that is Iraq, the future government will have to try to prevent Islamic fundamentalism, in particular the Shiite uprising in Iraq, from surfacing and at the same time implement a certain degree of "democracy."

Above all, Iraq will have to adhere to all the economic, political, and security commitments stemming from the war! On the other hand, only a popular uprising in Iraq can liberate the manacled hands and feet of the oppressed Iraqi nation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Americans should fear a people's uprising in Islamic Iraq more than anything else.

4. Under all circumstances, Islamic Iran supports and helps the oppressed Iraqi nation in the hardships that have befallen them. We want Iraq to regain its independence, wealth, and prosperity, and we want the people's suffering to end. However, a bloodless transfer of power in Iraq seems too farfetched and the situation will be far more complicated now that Saddam has apparently received information on a coup d'etat. Why are not other avenues being explored? The Europeans especially, who are thirsting for the region's oil, should not sit twiddling their thumbs waiting for the United States to do something. Why do the United Nations and other governments of the world not support an interim government comprised of Iraqi dissidents? Probably because they are apprehensive about interfering too much in the internal affairs of an independent country!

Ahmad Khomeyni on Opposition to U.S. 'Evil Aims'

LD1207103691 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 12 Jul 91

[Excerpts] Officials in charge of the offices of the Islamic Revolution Martyrs Foundation from all over the country, at the end of their four-day seminar last night met with Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, next to the sacred grave of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Eminence Imam Khomeyni, may he be admitted to God's paradise. [passage omitted]

In a part of his speech, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni described the American plan for the so-called new world order as a device to expand absolute American domination in the political geography of the Persian Gulf. He said: By raising the issue of a new world order, America wishes to destroy the Islamic and revolutionary movement through a comprehensive disarmament and to control the fate of the world community. He described the Islamic revolution as the main obstacle in the path of the expansion of American domination in the Persian Gulf region, adding: The Islamic revolution as the main focus of liberating revolutions is the only power which is properly confronting world blasphemy and the arrogant camp and will not allow America to achieve its evil aims.

Comment on Government Efforts To Stop Inflation

NC1607162791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Central News Unit Research Group commentary]

[Excerpts] In the name of God. As mentioned by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani in his Friday sermon, the most complex economic issues we face are high prices and inflation. The president's remarks highlight the difficulties of inflation vis-a-vis goods and government-produced commodities. [passage omitted]

There are four things that cause inflation in Iran: demand, production expenses, imports, and basic inflation by which we mean unemployment and economic stagnation.

Prior to the revolution, oil profits resulted in the rise of imports against foreign exchange earnings which exceeded consumption, the result being that our single-commodity exports became even more dependent.

With the implementation of the policy of non-oil exports and the strategy of selective imports following the revolution, we were able to wean ourselves from the dependence on single-commodity exports.

We faced the pressure of spiraling inflation, however, because items produced here were more expensive than imported ones. Resources were also scant and could not support an increase in production. Therefore, despite the astronomical war expenditure, the government was forced to pay massive subsidies which exhausted the treasury. During the war, prices were almost controlled due to the direct government supervision; production levels, however, due to the lack of raw materials, slumped to their lowest levels. A large segment of the foreign exchange earnings from non-oil exports was channeled into war expenditure and funds for the budget were taken from the Central Bank.

Following the war's end, the formation of the cabinet by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and the implementation of the Five-Year Plan, the saturation of the market with nationally produced goods was placed at the top of the agenda. By fixing exchange rates at 70 rials, the government was able to reduce borrowing from the Central Bank to 60 billion rials. Similarly, with the increased supply of raw materials to factories, unemployment levels dropped and the people's production and income rose. [passage omitted]

Another inflationary factor was the multiple rates for foreign exchange and the budget deficit, the elimination of which the government has some measures in hand, including the tax increase of private and wealthy sectors and the elimination of subsidies and multiple foreign exchange rates. These measures will result in prices reaching an equilibrium and supply increasing in relation to demand.

This is how the nation is moving toward expansion, production, and employment. Time is required, however, for these programs to bear fruit. The immediate problem is what path that most vulnerable stratum of society, which totals 70 percent of the country's population, should take until the results are achieved.

Due to the growth in production and the economy, the people have dealt with various issues at the expense of their welfare, and only 30 percent of the society is living well. This inequality has generated problems.

The Five-Year Plan will eliminate the deprivation of the oppressed stratum of society. We expect these programs to be implemented quickly so that we can achieve a more suitable balance in society by taxing the rich and providing inexpensive services and goods to the poor.

Judiciary Chief Calls For Security, Strength

LD1107164491 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1130 GMT 11 Jul 91

[Text] Commanders, deputies, and heads of greater Tehran's law enforcement force met the judiciary head this morning. At the meeting, the judiciary chief praised the law enforcement force of greater Tehran. He said: The maintanence of security in a society depends on the strength, eligibility, and authority of the law enforcement of that society. We must all obey the law and seriously stand up to world arrogance, which wants to deal blows to the Islamic system and make such people despondent. He added: revolution courts must be careful when dealing with social vices, especially corruption and prostitution.

He stressed: The people should have absolute security and peace in their homes. No one has the right to enter prople's homes without the permission of the judicial authorities.

Yazdi Appoints Revolution Prosecutor in Mashhad

LD1607212991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Excerpts] This morning, on the second day of his visit to Mashhad, Mr. Yazdi, head of the judiciary, said at a meeting of Ministry of Justice judges of Khorasan Province that trials and judges are the main axes of the rule of Islam and of the precise implementation of regulations and laws in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and he stressed the importance and gravity of the judiciary's responsibility to the people. Our correspondent reports:

[Correspondent] Ayatollah Yazdi said that the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran benefits from a very rich and lofty judicial machine and it is pursuing its task with total vigilance. He stressed the need for judges to become more knowledgeable. He added: All the resources of the judicial machine are being used toward this end. [passage omitted]

At the end of his remarks, the head of the judiciary praised the services of Prosecutor Moveysi and appointed Mir-'Emad, Mashhad's prosecutor general, as the town's Islamic Revolution prosecutor. He will also maintain his current post. [passage omitted]

Reza'i Returns, Comments on Trip to Pakistan

LD1707102191 Tehran IRNA in English 0904 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, 17 July, IRNA—Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Mohsen Reza'i here Wednesday said, "Iran is one of the major Islamic countries which can help unite the Islamic world."

Speaking to reporters upon arrival from an official visit to Pakistan, the IRGC commander noted that the objective of his visit was to review issues in the area of defence and ways of consolidating unity between the two countries.

He said his talks with the Pakistani president, prime minister, and a number of military commanders led to significant achievements.

Reza'i added that the Iranian military delegation inspected a number of military industries as well as the new weapons Pakistan has manufactured with the help of a number of countries, including China.

As for Iran's alliance with regional countries, the IRGC commander said, "Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is the upholder of the banner of unity the world over. Iran is a major Islamic country which can help unite the Islamic world."

He added that resumption of ties between Iran and the Persian Gulf states was for the same objective, noting "under the present sensitive conditions, a state of unity must emerge among Muslim countries."

Talks With Soviets on Esfahan Steel Mill

LD1707044791 Tehran IRNA in English 1633 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, 16 July, IRNA—Ways of raising the capacity of and renovating Esfahan steel mill were discussed by visiting Soviet Deputy Minister of Metallurgy Mr. Iveditov and Mines and Metals Minister Mohammad Hoseyn Mahluji here Tuesday.

The two also discussed mutual cooperation for optimum use of equipment installed in Esfahan steel mill, expansion of the plant, supply of iron ore to Iranian steel mills by the Soviets, and setting up of a bureau in Moscow by the Mines and Metals Ministry.

Iveditov expressed hope that the Esfahan steel mill's production would increase to 3.3 million tons a year.

Mahluji underlining the importance of protocols reached between the two countries called for mutual agreements to be enforced more quickly. He said Iran planned to expand its huge steel mill in Esfahan.

Iran has already negotiated with Japan's Nippon steel company, the world's largest producer of steel, asking for its technical assistance to expand the mill's production capacity to four-five million tons a year.

Sudanese Official Arrives in Tehran

LD1607155991 Tehran IRNA in English 1318 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] Tehran, 16 July, IRNA—Member of the Sudanese Leadership Council Colonel Sulayman Muhammad Sulayman carrying a message from General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir for president Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived here today.

Colonel Sulayman is also to follow up a letter of understanding inked between the two countries here last September on a series of mutual cooperation specially in the military area.

"The U.S.-sponsored regional arms control plan, should include all the countries equally, among them Israel," he told reporters upon arrival.

Meanwhile, Sulayman, who is heading a top delegation including two ministers, held his first round of talks with the Iranian minister of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Akbar Torkan here today.

Daily Assails Plan To Disarm Lebanese Militants

NC1207140891 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 3 Jul 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Disarming Lebanese Militants Detrimental to Palestine Cause"]

[Text] In the course of their advance toward the southern part of the country, the Lebanese Army encountered the Palestinian forces east of Sidon, and was forced to retreat. At the same time the Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi, has been quoted as saying that he would not tolerate the presence of several governments and armed militias in the country, and that no person or group other than the regular army was permitted to carry arms.

No doubt the return of peace and stability to Lebanon is a welcome development, and certainly the Lebanese government, like any other government in the world, has not only the right to enforce its sovereignty over the entire area of the country, but it is in fact its duty to do so. However, the situation in Lebanon is somewhat exceptional in view of the following considerations:

1. The concentration of the militant groups in Southern Lebanon who are fighting for their usurped rights and can not be expected to give up their fight.
2. The occupation of parts of the Southern Lebanon by the Zionist forces, a circumstance which faces the government with the task of driving out the foreign troops.
3. The continued Israeli threat against Lebanon and Syria which is checked to an effective extent by the presence of the militant groups in Southern Lebanon.
4. The Israeli government's intensification of its program of attracting Jewish immigrants from all over the world, and the danger resulting from the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

All these factors have created special circumstances in Southern Lebanon which totally modify the concept of having a single army (admittedly a significant dimension of national sovereignty), and it could even be argued that keeping the armed political groups would act in the interest of the national sovereignty.

At all events the attempt to disarm militant groups in Southern Lebanon is not only against the interests of the movement for the liberation of Palestine, it will also

work against the advancement of the Islamic and Arabic goals. Thus the presence of militant groups in southern Lebanon, who could fight the Zionist usurpers alongside of the Lebanese regular troops and the armies of the other countries fighting the Zionist regime, should be considered a definite advantage, and the right to carry arms should be preserved for all groups fighting the Israeli aggressors.

Undoubtedly under the present critical circumstances any armed encounter between the Lebanese Army and the militant groups in the south of the country would only be to the benefit of Israel, and past experiences have demonstrated the Zionist regime's propensity for taking advantage of this type of situation to bring about catastrophe in Lebanon.

It is, therefore, to be hoped that differences between the government and the militant groups will be settled through negotiations and that the government will not press for disarmament of the militant groups who always have done their best for the cause of the Palestinian people.

* Foreign Bank Debts Increase to $3.66 Billion

91AS1083f London KEYHAN in Persian 6 Jun 91 p 4

[Text] The various loans obtained by the Islamic Republic from international banks and financial institutions in the year 1990 increased Iran's debt to foreign banks during that year to more than $3.66 billion. Experts on international economic affairs believe that the Islamic regime's continuous efforts to obtain huge foreign loans will in the course of the current year raise Iran's debt to international banks and foreign financial institutions to an unprecedented level. Reports from reliable financial sources indicate that in the last few months the Islamic Republic has obtained money from Italy, France, Switzerland, Japan, and several other Western nations as loans, credit, and in various commercial forms. In addition to that, the regime's Central Bank is trying hard so that by meeting the conditions proposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund with regard to domestic subsidies and implementing special economic policies, it will be able to borrow comparable amounts from this reputable financial institution. The report on Iran's increased debts to international banks and foreign financial institutions as of late 1990 was published recently by the MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC DIGEST [MEED] of London. This publication, citing a report from the International Bank on Settling Financial Accounts, whose headquarters is in Switzerland, announced that Iran's total debt to international banks and foreign financial institutions as of December last year had increased to $3.664 billion. In part of its report, the above publication also announced that as of the end of last year Iran's assets had reached $6.69 billion, and this figure increased in the third and fourth quarters of 1990.

An expert on international banking affairs told KEYHAN's correspondent that the Islamic Republic is now borrowing significant amounts of money through advance sales of significant amounts of crude oil and petrochemical by-products to foreign companies, including Italian, German, French, Japanese, and Swiss companies, as well as by obtaining commercial credit in the form of 360- and 720-day bills of exchange from Germany, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, England, Japan, and several other industrial nations, and also by obtaining foreign investment based on the "buy-back" system, and statistics to be published in the future by the International Bank on Settling Financial Accounts of Switzerland will confirm the increase in the Islamic Republic's foreign debt.

Pakistan

Indian Report on Guerrilla Force Rebutted

BK1607154891 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 16 Jul 91

[Text] A news release issued in Rawalpindi today by the Inter-Services Public Relations Department described as totally baseless the Indian media reports that Pakistan has deployed a special Afghan mujahidin guerrilla force near the line of control at Punch and Rajauri sectors to assist Kashmiri freedom fighters. The press release said it is a mere fictitious story and is a part of Indian propaganda meant to mislead world opinion on the freedom struggle in occupied Kashmir.

Sri Lanka

LTTE Encouraged To Act Responsibly

BK1607140191 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 9 July 91 p 8

[Editorial: "Another Massacre"]

[Text] Saturday's massacre of 27 persons in two border villages, in the Polonnaruwa district, once again demonstrates that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], despite making some noises about peace talks, is hell-bent on trying to destabilise the eastern province where it is feeling the heat of the ongoing military operation.

These civilian massacres are particularly tragic because the victims are inevitably poor people, condemned by circumstances to eke out a living in remote areas where the climate itself is less than hospitable. They work very hard for a meagre living and, since this separatist war began, too often find themselves as gun fodder for the LTTE.

The Tiger strategy is transparent enough. For one thing, they would like to force the thinning out of troops ranged against them by compelling the military to offer security to vulnerable villages. Also, the LTTE has not yet lost

hope that it could somehow provoke some kind of communal backlash against the Tamils elsewhere in the country by engaging in brutal killings like Saturday's.

The Puttur and Karapola massacres have a third dimension. The majority of those who lost their lives are Muslims and there is every likelihood that the LTTE is seeking to stir a Muslim-Tamil communal cauldron in the eastern province. These have been their classic tactics over the years, and they care little about endangering the very people they claim to represent by trying to trigger communal violence.

Fortunately, the Sinhala people particularly have learned a bitter lesson from the ugly incidents of 1983 when Tamils living among the majority community were attacked. Those attacks were not the work of the majority of the Sinhalese, many of whom protected and offered succour to their Tamil neighbours. But a few goons, thugs and criminals looking for loot set off a conflagration that blackened the very image of the country.

A huge price was paid for those communal riots both by the victims and the country itself. Many fine people who would have been an asset to any nation chose to emigrate. The country's blossoming tourism industry was reduced to a shambles. The insurance payouts were huge. Above all, a great deal of human misery which shamed all right-thinking Lankans, was the result.

Our political leaders and others have, over the years, drummed the depth of that tragedy into the national consciousness. Today, people understand what unthinking communal holocausts can mean to a country and its people. That is why scores of attempts by the LTTE to provoke such incidents, in the interest of the propaganda mileage they can get in Western Europe, North America and elsewhere, have not succeeded.

But it is essential that people of all communities always keep in mind that these continue to be the tactics of the Tiger. Those of us living in Colombo have seen the full horror of the June 21 attack on the JOC [Joint Operations Command]. That knowledge alone must give us a better insight into what poor villagers, living in places like Puttur and Karapola, must feel today.

Many of these villagers are brave men and women who doggedly stay on their land despite the efforts of the LTTE to make them refugees huddled in some camp or other. The security forces have armed homeguards in many of the vulnerable areas to give these people a better chance of protecting themselves. Such measures have their own dangers but are often unavoidable.

Even if it does mean reducing the concentration of troops fighting the Tigers, the security authorities have shown a willingness to provide what assistance they can to villagers risking the kind of attacks the people of Puttur and Karapola suffered on Saturday.

The LTTE must realise that time is fast running out for them. The volume of evidence that they were responsible for the Rajiv Gandhi killing is mounting, and Chief Minister Jayalalitha Jayaram, of Tamil Nadu, has made it very clear that the hospitality that the Tigers once enjoyed in her South Indian State now belongs to the past. The interests of the Tamils of the north and the east demand an end to this useless war.

Colombo is willing to negotiate. There is no doubt that the Sinhala people will willingly concede a generous package of devolution that will preserve the country's unitary character and territorial integrity but give the people of the north-east ample powers to determine their own destiny.

It is now up to the LTTE to see sense.

114 'Militants,' 11 Soldiers Killed in Fighting

BK1707083091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] In Sri Lanka, 114 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] militants and 11 soldiers have been killed and several others wounded in the last 24 hours in the fierce fighting between government forces and LTTE in the northeast. A military official said that in their fight for the control of Elephant Pass on the seventh day yesterday, more than 75 militants and seven soldiers were killed. He said combined forces are advancing from (Vektilaikini) northeast of the Army camp with heavy resistance by the LTTE. Reports say that the fight at the camp site has eased, but has intensified outside. In (Janakpura), the Trincomalee District, in the eastern province, four soldiers and 29 LTTE militants were killed yesterday in exchange of fire.

'Fierce Fighting' in Northeast Kills 68 Persons

BK1707041891 Hong Kong AFP in English 0420 GMT 17 Jul 91

[Text] Colombo, July 17 (AFP)—Fierce fighting in two separate battles in Sri Lanka's northeast killed at least 68 people in the past 24 hours and left scores of others wounded, a military spokesman here said Wednesday.

The spokesman said that government troops lost 11 more men in two major clashes with the dominant Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas at northern Elephant Pass and northeastern Weli Oya.

He said that at least 50 more guerrillas were killed at Elephant Pass and seven more in Weli Oya in fresh fighting overnight Tuesday in the two embattled areas.

Officials Tuesday put the death toll in the fighting in the past week at 175 at Elephant Pass and 28 at Weli Oya.

The spokesman said troops advancing towards the besieged elephant pass army garrison were encountering stiff resistance from the Tigers, who had also fired mortar bombs at the camp late Tuesday after a brief lull.

Military officials said so far some 129 soldiers and large numbers of LTTE men had also been wounded in the Elephant Pass battle since the guerrillas launched their attempt to overrun the camp a week ago.

The spokesman said 18 more soldiers were injured in the other military offensive in Weli Oya which continued Wednesday.